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# CORNHILL MAGAZINE

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1932

EDITED BY  
LEONARD HUXLEY



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# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1932.

FROM 'WORKS AND DAYS': THE DIARY OF  
'MICHAEL FIELD.'

EDITED BY T. STURGE MOORE.

IV. GEORGE MEREDITH AND 'MICHAEL FIELD.'  
(Continued.)

*George Meredith to Katherine Bradley.*

Box Hill, October 6, 1893.

MY DEAR MISS BRADLEY,—

I read your *Ferencz*<sup>1</sup> last night: and it is good: I think it should act well. But bear to hear this from me:—I do not find in your dramatic prose the complete ring that there is in the sound and volume of your blank verse lines. In the *Tragic Mary* and *Stephania*, for example. Only by having you beside me and reading to you, could I give the notion of the 'translated' tone of some parts of the dialogue.—I would offer to come to you, but am pressed to work all through the day. Will Michael Field dine with me? A fly shall meet the twin Muses and a fly take them back to the station, dropping them at Reigate. Doubtless there will be a friendly train. Or if not, I can get beds at the inn hard by. I have much to say of *Stephania*, which I greatly admire in the poetry, but yet have to criticise. For you do not mean that one should give one's heart to her case less than to Otho? But so it is with me. Her case cannot be pleaded in the abstract. To win sympathy with her to the end, her situation has to be pictured. A scene is wanting.—I read it three times and meant daily to write of it. I was under agreement to finish a Novel for the *Pall Mall* magazine. Now I am bound to do the same for *Scribner's*. And verse will spout at times! And I am not robust. Think how little time I have for letters.

Your most faithful,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Entry by Edith Cooper in *Works and Days*. October 14, 1893.

. . . Well, we go to the inn where Keats wrote *Endymion*, put on evening clothes, and ascend to Flint Cottage. George looks far more vigorous; he has left off wine and sweets, and now can work from ten to five. A novel comes out in December's *P.M.* magazine

<sup>1</sup> The hero of *A Question of Memory*.

and another in January's *Scribner's*. The small table was fleckered with maidenhair round a sunshine strip of satin, and George sat pressing his delicious wine with pleasure in Bacchic appreciation. He loves *Stephania*, but he thinks that to obtain sympathy with her, she should have entered with the hoots and insults of the people following the harlot, not with the calm retrospection of her disgrace that opens the play—a curious point of view. Round the cottage fire he read and commented on the first act of *A Question [A Question of Memory]*, performed by the Independent Theatre on October 27, 1893]. He, the Euphuist in language, rallied us on our tendency not to use the vernacular—his laugh was delicious, with no more offence in it than a brook's on stones, and as much eloquence. He said a thing about *Ferencz* in Act I, that I cannot write down yet . . . not till the play is played—a thing! confound him! His talk foamed before us and we had good draughts. There is great magnetism in his eyes—brain lays hold of one from them. His voice rolled out Sophocles. He called Lewis Morris the Harlequin Clown of the Muses.

*George Meredith to 'Michael Field.'*

Box Hill, August 19, 1895.

MY DEAR MICHAEL FIELD,—

I rejoice to know of you as in good working order, and trust the Drama will not fall short of *Stephania*. Pray visit me when the noble mood is on you. . . . As to the periodical [*The Pageant*] I have refused to contribute in so many cases that I cannot make an exception.

With my homage,  
I am your faithful,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

*George Meredith to 'Michael Field.'*

Box Hill, August 19, 1895.

MY DEAR MICHAEL FIELD,—

You are oddly affected by trifles, but I am reminded of the quivering reed after the breeze when I think of your valiant power to recover. Now bear with me, I have little praise for the line or the characters of your *Attila*. If you had irony in aim you should not have made drama. You could of course produce keenest irony through clashes of your personæ. But poor Honoria is hardly a subject for it. Perhaps you meant the reflecting of grim light on the sex-mania current. That would be satire, quite enough to kill your poetry. Will you come and hear more? I have not time to write a criticism. It seems to me that your present failure

comes of the design to do too much. Your naturally splendid dramatic line sinks broken under the burden of satire and stage constrictions.

Your most faithful,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Entry by Edith Cooper in *Works and Days*. December 2, 1895.

We travel beside the grey chalk downs—the train seeming slow and then quick—to Box Hill and drive up Mickleham Valley, under a flushed sky . . . not a flushed west, but from zenith to horizon, colour and gloaming in one.

The down opposite Flint Cottage bronzed with night and sunset; the little yews blot ominously—we turn in at the gate, and as the carriage curves round the flower-beds, on the other curve, I see George—a stick, a body clothed in more crimson-bronze than the down beyond the gate, more gaunt and antequely distinguished than those chalk slopes . . . and from the midst of the glow and grimness a hat goes up, like an eagle from roost.

A maid takes our rugs at the cottage door and the master comes first to the further carriage window—'I am delighted to welcome you, ladies'—and then round the carriage to the steps. His courtesy is disconcerting—it is not a breath, but an emphasis—not an encouragement, but a declaration of itself . . . a race war-cry rather than the peace of gentle breeding.

I am a heap of tumbled snow inside, confused and chill at heart as I enter . . . the new dog is petted as 'Dear' and 'Sweetie,' both words pronounced with a clinging slowness that is almost 'mouthing'—an artificial habit of speech that is not a caress . . . the dog attacks my boa with all the gallantry of puppyhood and George makes some 'la, la, la,' notes of song deep in his throat, that somehow are an artificial offence against his aggressive courtesy.

Michael seats herself in an arm-chair, a table between her and me—George faces her, his eyes on her face nearly the whole two hours and a half. I have time to watch him and listen with a note-book open in my brain. His head is of Elgin Marble perfection. I have never seen a cranium like his for strength and purity, for line and modelling, the hair floats out from the beautiful structure, silvery, with swirl and softness that is natural and grace that is obtained by the scissors. A same perfection haunts the eyelids as the head—form, with a life over it that spiritualises.

With these two features, nobility is at end—the nose is shrewish, lacking in generosity, breadth of inspiration, flutter of sensitiveness—a not ill-shaped, but poor nose. The mouth is sunk, grim—the words form in the brain and are emitted; they do not rise fresh on the lips. There is no eloquence, no magic on those lips of almost

parallel lines; under the beard one has a prophetic sense that the chin is peaked like the nose. Those eyes have perhaps been worn out by age and sorrow . . . they have no lightnings, no prehensile power, no malice. They neither inherit the eyes of others, nor subdue them, nor bewitch them. I can never be sure they move together, but even this does not make them interesting—their colour is a mere vagueness between brown and indigo.

The intellect has devoured the humanity of the expression, that only asserts itself in the smile—not bright, but without cruelty, and with less artifice in it than in the voice and manner.

The whiskery space between beard and hair is a masterpiece—there is charming work there, in the slight suggestion of ripples of carving on the jaw and cheek.

The neck carries the head well out of the coat. The tie is scarlet-red, the coat mulberry-brown, the trousers a rough mouse-grey—the linen spotless.

He lays a French book in limp parchment beside us . . . memory refuses to give me back the name of book or author. The poems are short and, to a glance, cut into shape with real artistic knowledge. 'I know now how the French work—these little things are exquisite. Would you like to take them home? You will not mind it . . . they are a little *warm*—but you read the classics, Sappho. We who write can afford to take a skiey survey of all life.'

We have not been reading French lately—German.

'You will perhaps be surprised to hear that I find Schopenhauer most tonic reading, that braces me like an east wind. He has laid out the elements of life, exposed their nature and value as no other philosopher—he has sounded life—but he is not content with that; he must give a personal judgment on his exposition, and the judgment is of no value, being the result of a nature vitiated by sour ancestry—his mother. He was not philosophic enough to abstract his personality from his inspiration. The one was deathly, the other vital; and as such, I reject his personal estimates, while accepting his doctrine of life. Yes, Schopenhauer gives us an exposition and a judgment—one true, the other false.'

We murmur the name of Nietzsche as a man who accepts the exposition and reverses the judgment of Schopenhauer. 'Nietzsche is a wrong-headed madman of morbid tendencies. I am not speaking of him; but of Schopenhauer's satisfying analysis of the elements by which we live.'

George then goes on to speak of the folly of self-interest as opposed to absorption in the good of others, in the life of the race. When we live to others we are conjoined to Nature, who only cares for the race. (This conversation seemed to taste of mid-Victorian,

Tennysonian views.) Old people should never die while they are alive, for the sake of the young: they should not cloud the expansive years of those around them. 'When I was young, all the middle-aged people seemed to live only to spread disenchantment round them.'

We ask him of his daughter and hear that he is again a grandfather, this time to his daughter's daughter. He points to his grandson, 'A jolly little fellow—you see in that photograph. He is hesitating as to whether he shall be Hercules or Falstaff; Falstaff somewhat in the ascendant.' His daughter he regrets, because she answered his letters. He has more than a dozen every morning, only one of which he often answers. Because he wrote of swimming in his last novel, he is asked to subscribe to Swimming Baths—we threaten him with Alpine Clubs after his Swiss chapters in *The Amazing Marriage*. Americans write that they want to come to Flint Cottage and give a cordial shake to his hand—'while I have the supreme satisfaction of knowing that they long to do the same with the hand of everyone whose name is on the lips of men.'

He is glad to see his grandchildren, since they are healthy—there is no tragedy like a weak child.

We ask—has he forsaken the Chalet?—'At night—yes; I sleep at my house now, and miss going out at all hours into the wood, as I did. I know all the darkest darknesses of night among the boughs and all the changes of the light for dawn.'

'But this morning I saw a most beautiful sight. Venus was large and firm between moonset and sunrise, at half-past six. Day was pulsing up and the moon still shining, but Venus was unmitigated; I shall never forget that undrowned lustre. It seemed as if a beautiful angel beat wings in mid-air . . . for the image expands the fact—an angel with streaming brightness secure from every earthly light.'

We tell him he overpraises the Welsh in his book—we can scarcely forgive him—'They have one great quality—*fervency*, but they are wrong-headed, perverse . . . every village has at least a dozen poets; they are not unnatural to the population, as in England. The English are wholly inartistic—the pig-body of the nations. Matter is all they understand. . . . They materialise every ceremony—the Guildhall gives the tone—they could not even bury their Wellington without dragging through the streets a golden calf that had the staggers. They ruin all their poets, for they only praise what they find easy to understand. Tennyson, who had poetic endowment, but no intellect, let them have their way with him. He wrote *The Farmer*—then to please them he must needs write a *Cobbler*; he found they liked *Locksley Hall*; he wrote a second one, and so on.

Tennyson had unequalled power of vignetting landscapes in words. Then George quotes the opening lines of *Oenone*:

'The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly down . . . etc.,'

giving the planes of the landscape with a voice that brings out the value of the position of each word in the passage—his voice passed over the word-painting like mastic, strengthening the impression.

He then quotes:

'On one side lay the ocean and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.'

Simple but perfect—and the writer of these lines could perpetrate the sloppy lines of *The Idylls*—emasculated, untouched with the magic of the middle ages.

He praises Lucretius also.

Richard Le Gallienne he hoped would have made an excellent light essayist—but he too had been ruined by English stupidity and forced editions.

The English have no tradition of manners—even Browning transgressed in the unpardonable lines on E. Fitzgerald. Michael says, 'Not unpardonable, since he believed an attack had been made on his dead wife.' 'Yes, wholly indefensible. But then he was a Jew.'

Why did we let it pass? Miss Browning has assured us that the family knows nothing of any trace of Jewish blood.

He has heard that Alfred Austin will be laureate—he thinks it will suit little Alfred to hymn the babies of the House of Hanover. Swinburne could not be laureate because of his lines on the assassination of the Czar. . . . *Anactoria* and youthful sins could be got over, but not a political utterance, though it meant no more than the whistle of the Scotch express going out from Euston.

'You are not giving us what we came to hear—more about *Attila*.'

'I am afraid you are abashed by what I have written.'

'No, be sure.'

'Not abashed?'

'We are come to hear more.'

'I have not much more to say, but it shall be said.'

We say firmly that we know the play would act well, that the full animation would come with the players' voices—we calculated their part. Honoria was conceived with Sarah Bernhardt before us all the while.



He admits our plea—then talk drifts on the contrast between Sarah and Duse. Meredith hates Sarah as a Tragedian—when the great breath of tragedy is needed one loses her argentine voice—she never suggests what is at the back of passion and therefore only presents rhetoric. Coquelin agrees with Meredith that she is the perfect comedian of the world, lost to it—he once played with her when she took a light rôle after twenty-four hours' study. It was not acting with her—it was living with her. He fell on his knees after the performance and thanked her as a goddess.

'Duse is the great Tragedian; the passions disclose themselves in their depth and compass as she acts. She takes the harp and all the strings unfold their utmost of music—Sarah claws and strains them and they are reticent.'

Meredith says he regrets the death of our friend Wharton—a friend from what his book brought to us, not a personal friend, I explain. 'His *Sappho* is delightful—I got it the other day. But how filled with pallor, from the metrical versions of *Sappho* admitted!—One turns to the prose translations for healing. Even Swinburne fails—he is too full of the swoon . . . *Sappho* never approaches languor of the deathly kind . . . she has such sustaining passion.'

Then Meredith hopes we are setting to work again—not allowing any paralysis from the world's breath to seize us—we must work to be encouraged. 'You and I are outcasts. We are doing work that is not wanted. I am only alive because *I would live*.'

We tell him of our ten guineas—'For a poem—you move me to envy.' He then proposed it should be spent in giving ten poets (himself included) a holiday on Leith Hill—a guinea a head. There would be no difficulty in finding the poets, if we did not enquire too deeply beneath the title . . . but the peace of the hill-top!—and he sketches the diatribes of one poet against his fellows, and of them against him and each other, with grim copiousness of burlesque and humour which is his usual cross between wit and humour.

The cab rolls up and blinks a light in. We rise at once, for there is the pace of fatigue in the brilliant talk, that went on the first hour tirelessly. George takes my hand and says with quite inhuman polish of manner:

'I have been delighted to see you, my dear lady.'

Michael thanks him for letting us come and for scolding us. 'Oh, I don't scold *you*—I suggest and am honoured that you listen. You are among the few who are *workers*, who are working with me for the same things.'

'Yes, we do work—we joy in that.'

A smile makes the ruin of his face bland: we step into the

darkness while his voice enquires anxiously if Pete, his dog, has slipped out and is in danger of the wheels. From the carriage we see him, a lank shadow against the hall-light, keeping the form of an arrested bow as we depart.

One goes away chill—one's being unexercised—the conversation one has heard is like marvellous conjuring ; one's mind is in a dazzle—but one's nature has not received virtue, nor been eased of the pressing of its own virtue.

In Browning an overplus of the Intellect was vitalised by the Heart.

In Meredith the living Heart rarely kindles the overplus of Intellect. He sits by one, a Stranger—almost belonging to another planet, where the laws of life are reversed—and the head generates. His great women, so completely of this earth, come from creative depths where *The Mothers* hide in caves—inaccessible to Welsh wrong-headedness and Keltic antipathies, modern self-consciousness and sententious sterility.

*After-thoughts.*

Michael speaks to him of our delight in his *ladies*—'Women untainted by religion and untainted by lust.' His face gives thanks for the appreciation.

When we asked him about his health, he replied—'The body !—ah, there is no fault with the mind. I hope to work on to the last spark, to do otherwise would be to own myself defeated.'

(So Browning persisted and came at last to *Asolando*—where age through persistence had almost completed the circle and drew itself into youth again. *The Amazing Marriage*, coming after *Lord Ormont*, promises this hard-won beauty of renewed youthfulness in Meredith.)

When on our arrival we asked for assurance that two and a half hours would not fatigue him, he assured us, 'No . . . Life is too short for me to tell lies.' He repeated what he had said about sex-hatred. He knew men who detested women and women who detested men. This was due to severance of interest and education. Boys and girls should be brought up together—the black sheep—for there are female black sheep as well as male—being weeded out. He would have girls learn to take a cuff—a cuff on the cheek.

Entry by Edith Cooper in *Works and Days*. November 24, 1896.

With George Meredith for lunch—we asked for an afternoon call, and against our will are constrained to lunch. A cold east wind deadens sky and air and makes the distant coppices look distressing. We walk to Burford Bridge and pause at the Inn for



coffee. On the table are bulbous chrysanthemums, rich in colour, old, vast—'Like entrées,' Michael remarks. We wonder how we should feel if Keats entered. Michael would at once treat him to her method of the leading question. In the labyrinths of the Inn, we agree, he must have had great difficulty in finding his bedroom.

At the bottom of the hill a photographer challenges us to have our portraits taken, 'The two together, this moment, for a shilling.' We almost yield to the fun of catching our pilgrim expression as we ascend Hill Difficulty—but the wind!—it tames the heart out of such resolve. A red house is rising on George's hillside, with hammer-taps and voices as accompaniment. The woodland sanctity is gone for ever. As we curve round to the cottage, we hear a clank and shuffle behind the box-hedges that is ominous—yes, George himself comes into sight on his stick and in an old grey coat. He takes a hand of each—'I am very glad to see you,' a formula, but said gently.

Then at once he tells us he is working at great pressure on three Odes. 'It is an attempt to make History sing.' The subjects—French Revolution, Napoleon, and Alsace-Lorraine. He acknowledges, 'It is extremely difficult to be discriminating and yet songful.' At command, we leave the ode-subject and enter the cottage. Cloaks removed, we find him in the drawing-room, deep in a chair and beg him not to rise from the deep, seating ourselves where we can ask questions and reply, yet be heard. He speaks more of the odes—Napoleon is 'heavy artillery' to manage.

Then he demands our news and Michael tells the story of Raoul and Anna. He takes in the *Débats*—for its writing, but missed the article that struck us. . . .

*Michael.* What do you think of the morals of the story?

*George.* All depends on the character of the repudiated wife.

*Michael.* She is corrupt and faithless.

*George.* Then Raoul was quite right—there is no law I acknowledge that can make a man live with a vile woman or a woman with a vile man. (The voice is sword-like.) . . . (He muses.) The story is most interesting and possesses dramatic merit.

Then he looks at his watch—a lady is expected from town, a Mrs. —, who makes three hundred a year 'in picking over our work.' The hearing of her is an influence that turns the east wind heavenly by comparison. . . . He says *she writes* to come, or we should be angered through every bristle at such an unhonoured guest being asked to share our few hours at Flint Cottage. How infelicitous those who should feel happily are!—and the gallant Celt is capable of the outrage infelicitous in a high degree.

However the lunch bell rings and the female picker and stealer does not arrive. We sit down joyously.

Then Meredith questions, 'Do you know Mrs. Meynell?' He admires her essays. They are full of 'justesse';—'they have a remarkable measure; they are critical in the best sense.' 'You wrote of them!' 'Yes, I said what I felt ought to be said.' He describes her as having a very lovely temperament, humble and retiring in all truth. She hero-worships Patmore, and when she writes poems he welcomes them with 'strains of the double flute,' that do them harm.

Pete is rebuked with Gargantuan phrasing: 'Pete, my darling Pete, now don't you set yourself in this sweetly seductive attitude before that lady—Pete, Pete.' The dog barks as if he had dynamite in him—a voice passes over the threshold. . . . The picker and stealer arrives, whilst her host closes his eyes in dismay and opens his lips with semi-imprecations against people who do not keep their appointments. She has a fleshy face—all the features flesh as an uncooked pie in paste—eyes that are points in the unmeaning knobiness, a laugh that sibilantly flatters, stiff body and chestnut clothes. I begin to look at the clock—one hour and three-quarters before our cab comes!

She mentions a certain child as precocious—this launches George on a delightful sketch of Wycliffe, Tom Taylor's precocious offspring.

'Tom and his wife made themselves ridiculous at London dinners by reciting the marvellous cleverness of Wycliffe—That morning, he had put a spoon in his mouth exclaiming, "Pap" . . . and as he withdrew it, had uttered . . . "Ah!"

'Some eight years after, Tom was lamenting that Wycliffe was incapable of learning anything. Tutor after tutor gave him up in despair—what was to be done with him? Eight years more went by and Tom and his wife announced in Society that Wycliffe was going to be an artist; they grew eloquent on his studio, his industry. One day I was in the New Gallery and met Tom, his wife and Wycliffe. I rashly asked if Wycliffe had anything on the walls. The six eyeballs went up in one direction, earnest, solemn, whitened eyeballs, and there, in a dusty far-away corner, I could just see a lion. It looked as though it were sewn up round sawdust, as if a roar would have split it to pieces. Nothing was ever so funny as those six whitened eyeballs and that lion!

The talk goes on to the portraits of George—praise of the Hollyer photos. . . . George gives a wondrous account of his portrait in the new issue of his works and the effect of the original.

'Sir Trevor Lawrence asked me to sit for only three hours to the artist—I hate it, but he said it would please his wife. But the

three hours gave no satisfaction, and next day the young man begged so prettily for grace that I had to yield, and the result was pronounced satisfactory. I beheld a face of gruel in which floated balls like the eyes of a cod-fish kept for three days in ice. (There were also brown concaves in the gruel.) The nose was a reed shaken in the wind; the grim mouth was packed full of savage teeth—and this was an Impressionist's impression of me. One eye was completely dead. Sargent made me an amiable Shade.'

In the drawing-room ill-luck reigns for us. The picker and stealer gets hold of the chair that is George's ear and the goal of his talk. I have a corner and the dog and enjoy after my kind. Every now and then George asks us about R——! as if we had any concern with him, a correspondent of years ago, self-constituted and unknown to us! We are riled by such nonsense. George's proudest achievement is a parody of R——'s sonnets. Coffee comes and cigarettes are proposed—Michael says she is somewhat surprised that he proposes smoking to ladies: does he really approve?

His face clouds with some memory that is as a Gorgon to it—out of a frightful pause floats, 'Ah well!'—In a moment or two he is speaking as if it were the most natural thing in the world and laughing at a boy who said it was funny to see Mrs. Meynell smoking with evident dislike and a very evident amateur—when in truth she had smoked with her father since girlhood. George himself looks remarkably fine with the delicate gyration of the smoke-circles round his sinuous face and perfect head—not a prophet but a god of snarls and irony in Pythian comradeship.

He would rather have half a dinner than lose his whole cigar—but man has to be raised to enjoy tobacco, as is always the case with perfectly celestial things—one must be in a blessed mood to engage its blessings.

Suderman is mentioned—George knows him but little: Hauptmann, not at all—though he makes the remark that the latter has a *Tendenz*, and to have that is like having a hammer behind a pointed thing.

It was Mrs. Meynell, who, while staying at the Inn, persuaded George, with those feminine wiles that are so charming, even when one sees through them, to undertake the *Odes*. . . . He is reading hundreds of French Memoirs. He no longer works in the Chalet, but in his drawing-room arm-chair.

A break in the conversation—

The Picker gets up and draws out of her string-bag a parcel she begins to unwrap—'Not a gift, I trust,' groans George. 'We won't call it a gift—only a little thing to amuse you,' she warbles. . . . 'You see, dear friend, it is only a toy,'—it is a model of the Dresden bridal-cup—with a hollow of good size for the bridegroom to empty,

and one of a thimble-size for the lips of the bride. 'You must forgive me, but this is for a young couple! Give it to Will [his son] and his wife. They would say "I have drunk my share—I mine—and it is quite too delicious a gift!" But I am a wild-boar in a wood; I rush out with my tusks (his hands curve the form), and then, when I have frightened people, I rush back with my tusks.' 'Oh, do take it.'—'No, no—give it to Will. You see, I have not an ornament on my person. You must forgive a hermit curmudgeon like me. Give it to Will.' 'Oh, if you wish it, you shall give it to him.' 'No, no—you!'—'Then it shall be *our* gift.'—'You are tremendously tenacious; no, it must come from you; you must take it to them.' 'Well if you wish'—and she shudders with humiliation and turns the subject, leaving the cup on the table. It is a cruel scene to witness, but deserved—the gift is indelicate from a widow to a widower, presumptuous to a great writer, not to be accepted.

George keeps up an undercurrent of bitterness against English literary life. Authors will be the shoeblacks of the next century. . . . Michael asks what he would have done if he had had a fortune left to him—'Having felt the pulse of my public already, I should not have cared if my works were burnt—except that I should have liked to be read in France.'

He describes the style of Lemaitre—as rash, full of after-communings, rich in welcome, the blame reasonably disposed on the suppositions of the moment. He gives some French stories, dramatically. One is delicious—the saying that marriage after a liaison is a decent way of separating.

Sarah Grand came to see him with Mrs. Meynell and laughed till she declared her sides ached in bed—'She seemed *satisfied*,' he remarks with comic emphasis. He thinks she will improve, for she had said she had begun to care for nothing but literature—'And you think *that* a good sign?' says Michael—'I should think a writer who was worth reading would care most of all for life.'

'Ah, well!' he hums.

Our cab is late—we leave the room to fetch our wraps, intending to start on foot for the next train, if the cab proves faithless.

I hear George say as we go, 'I hope you are not vexed with me, Hortense.'—When we return, the cab is at the door, George deep in his seat with the new edition of *Richard Feverel* on his knees, feverishly inscribing it. With the absorption of age he hardly notices Michael's hand with a touch—he says to me carelessly, 'You will excuse my rising,'—I am silent and bow like a snow-laden tree, while Michael's voice rings out as if a challenge were thrown down, 'Good-bye, Mr. Meredith,'—an alarmed, hurrying, 'God bless you'—and we are in the cab with seething hearts.

*George Meredith to 'Michael Field.'*

Box Hill, July 26, 1898.

DEAR MICHAEL FIELD,—

Let me hope that your mood may have softened since you wrote to me : and also that you did not write in such a tone to another. The article was harsh, but we who publish books of verse must put on a mantle of philosophy when we do so. I speak from my own practice. Be sure that readers appreciative of animated lines will be keenly sensible of the fact of an existence of hostility to Michael Field. It happens that present literary tastes are feverish—and your themes are drawn from history, and remote. Your work is hastily read, hastily summarised. Refuse to be wounded by the comments : refer your mind to the public which values you, and continue to produce what you can issue with the knowledge that it is good. If not many, yet a worthy minority may be counted upon to support you. If you are in the temper for taking advice my simple words may be of service.

Yours very truly,  
G. M.

*George Meredith to 'Michael Field.'*

Box Hill, November 16, 1899.

DEAR MICHAEL FIELD,—

Your noble stand for pure poetic literature will have its reward, but evidently you have to wait. If only for the beauty of the verse, dramatic and lyric, it should meet with cordial greeting and even that, as far as I see, is unrecognised. Nevertheless, though you are sensitive, you have courage ; sustainment as well in the perpetual springs of verse within you. I have had it in mind to write my appreciation of *Aura* and *The Noontide Branches* for some time, and would do so if the penning of letters were not, in my present state of health, so great a burden. I hope you find indemnification for the loss of country scenes in your town suburb,<sup>1</sup> and can work cheerfully there.

Your most faithful,  
GEORGE MEREDITH.

[Possibly on both sides disillusionment had been felt ? If, as seems evident, the Picker was the person addressed as Hortense on page 25, jealousy may partly explain their show of temper and ensuing coldness. The preservation of his last two letters without comment may indicate that the estrangement was rather regretted on his side than on theirs.]

<sup>1</sup> They had moved to 1 The Paragon, Richmond-on-Thames.

## THE GRAPHOLOGIN: A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE.

BY CLAUD MULLINS.

WHENEVER I am told of an unusual or inexplicable happening, my first impulse is to believe that either the original or some later narrator is what we in the Law call an unreliable witness. This attitude of mind applies especially to any stories which may reach me from such provinces as Spiritualism, Psychic Research, Occultism or even Psychological or Psycho-Analytical treatment and Palmistry. I am inherently reluctant to accept what I cannot explain. Since the War such matters as these have been studied and practised as never before, but often those whose enthusiasm in these directions is the greatest are the least competent for the task. This fact has encouraged in many of us, myself included, a distrust and scepticism which it is difficult to overcome even when genuine reports of real work done are forthcoming. But the most sceptical of us are wise if we do not entirely close our minds to the possibility of having to accept phenomena which we cannot explain.

I have recently experienced a personal exhibition of powers for which neither I nor those whom I have consulted can give any explanation, and I desire at the outset of my account, therefore, to make it clear that both by temperament and by training I am not one of those whose wish and eagerness to accept evidence in these matters is such as to minimise their value as witnesses. Fifteen years' practical work at the English Bar and my present work as a London police-court magistrate have not made me prone to accept readily accounts and theories which cannot fit in with previous experience and known laws. It is well to emphasise this sceptical outlook in all such matters in order that the abilities of the lady of whose work I propose to tell may be understood in their true light.

'Graphology,' the art of discerning character from a person's handwriting, is used very little in the English-speaking world. Neither in my professional life nor privately have I ever heard of people obtaining reports from graphologists about those whom they are about to trust. But graphology is employed to a considerable extent in certain European countries, notably Germany



and Switzerland. There banks, insurance companies and commercial men make extensive use of handwriting analyses in order to ascertain the respectability, reliability, etc., of those whose personal character is going to be important to them. When, for instance, it is proposed to appoint new members of the staff, a personal letter from the intending recruit is frequently insisted upon and this letter is submitted to a graphologist for report. Or when a contract is under consideration which must depend for its success upon the integrity of the other party, then similarly the handwriting analysis is resorted to. The graphologist thus plays a part supplemental to what business men in this country know as a Stubbs report.

There is no end to the uses to which the art of a graphologist can be put, once it is proved and admitted that character is revealed in handwriting. Both in business and in private life the opportunities for employing the aid of the graphologist must be innumerable.

But it is not of graphology in general that I set out to write. For some time I have heard remarkable accounts of the ability and work of a certain German lady graphologist who is almost unique, and during a recent visit to Germany I found an opportunity to seek her out and to test her achievements. The ordinary graphologist is what may be termed a scientific graphologist. He or she studies the details of handwriting, often with a magnifying-glass. The slopes, the positions, the curves and so on are noted, and these form the basis of the report. But this remarkable lady, *Fräulein Oesterreicher*, is an intuitive graphologist. She makes no such detailed examination of the handwriting, and yet is able to give a far wider report as to the character and personality of the writer than any scientific graphologist can ever produce. As soon as a handwriting is shown to her, assuming that there is any character in it at all, she is able by some gift which I make no attempt to explain, to see and describe the writer in a manner which can only be described as uncanny.

Before describing the tests of which I was a personal witness I would retail some of her remarkable achievements which I have at second hand. All of them come from witnesses who are well known to me and in whose integrity and accuracy I have absolute faith.

A. is an English girl, the daughter of a well-known doctor. She is gifted in high degree, and is very handsome; but she was

born, and has always been, stone deaf. Every aid of modern science has been at her service, and the extent to which A. has triumphed over her innate handicap is wonderful, but stone deaf she has remained. Frau H., a great friend of A. and of Fräulein Oesterreicher (and of myself) showed Fräulein Oesterreicher one of A.'s letters. Nothing was said about A. Fräulein Oesterreicher, who had never seen or heard of A., glanced at the letter and at once said, 'Is it possible? This beautiful and gifted girl is absolutely deaf.' She went on to describe A.'s unusual qualities and strong artistic gifts.

Shortly after the War, in the height of the terrible time of inflation in Germany, Herr H. heard from a pre-war friend in Stockholm about a certain lottery, and was invited to take a ticket. Though he could ill afford it, Herr H. sent the money. The Stockholm friend in due course sent the number of the ticket, but not the ticket itself. For years nothing more was heard, but eventually through other friends Herr H. had reason to believe that his ticket had won one of the smaller prizes. Several letters were sent to the Stockholm friend, but never was any reply forthcoming. Quite casually one evening Herr H. showed his letter from Stockholm to Fräulein Oesterreicher, saying nothing. At once Fräulein Oesterreicher looked grave. 'This can be no friend of yours,' she said. 'This man is a cheat. You cannot trust him in any way.'

During a visit to Sweden in the summer of 1931 Fräulein Oesterreicher was shown by way of a test the handwriting of a man about whom considerable anxiety was being felt. Included in the analysis that Fräulein Oesterreicher gave was the statement that the man showed strong suicidal tendencies. Within twenty-four hours that man was dead by his own hand. During this same visit Countess Fanny von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf showed Fräulein Oesterreicher envelopes that she had received from Ellen Key, Count Hermann Keyserling, Sven Hedin and others, and the remarkable analyses, given without any knowledge of the identity of the writers, were published in the Swedish review *Idun* of 23 August, 1931.

A remarkable feature of Fräulein Oesterreicher's gift is that on occasions it can work in the reverse way. At Frau H.'s house one of the retired rulers of a German state was once visiting when Fräulein Oesterreicher was there. The ex-ruler was sceptical and presently said rather challengingly, 'I suppose you know already



how I write!' Fräulein Oesterreicher had never seen his writing, but she said 'Yes, I know how you sign your name,' and she promptly 'forged' his signature, absolutely correct, as the ex-ruler admitted. Eye-witnesses told me this story, and Fräulein Oesterreicher herself confirmed it when I met her.

When one hears this kind of story from friends in whose reliability one has every reason to rely, one cannot airily dismiss it, however sceptical one may be by nature. In these post-war years, as I have said, one often hears accounts of events which to the layman, and probably to a lawyer specially, seem incredible. They usually produce in me a doubt as to the reliability of those who tell them. But in this case I knew Herr and Frau H. well. I knew them to be normal, sensible people without any association with or sympathy for those who dabble in psychic phenomena. So in October last, while staying at their house, I sought an opportunity of meeting Fräulein Oesterreicher. She came, and for the first day I purposely made no attempt to explore her abilities directly. I wanted to know the woman before I met the 'graphologist.' We talked of general matters, in particular of the psychology and proper treatment of criminals, a subject of great interest in the work of us both. Next morning I asked her frankly if I might test her powers as *graphologin*, and she consented.

I should explain that shortly before our visit both my wife and an American friend of ours had arranged through Frau H. for '*Schriftproben*' (handwriting analyses) to be made on themselves by Fräulein Oesterreicher, then a complete stranger to them both. The reports were certainly remarkable. That on my wife, a whole page of typewriting, stated her sex, approximate age, the background from which she came and its effects on her development, not only the fact that she is a mother but her adaptabilities to the life of a mother, her attitude towards music and art, and her general temperament, with several allusions to specific characteristics which only a husband or a most intimate friend could possibly know of, and all absolutely correct. The report on the young American friend had been equally remarkable. It emphasised his love of music, his uncertainty as to his own future, and many other personal traits, some of which were little known even to himself. But the lawyer in me made me feel that it was possible that Frau H., when showing these letters from my wife and the American, had unwittingly said or indicated something which would convey a meaning to Fräulein Oesterreicher to help her in

her analysis. Now I had an opportunity of testing her gift for myself.

My wife happened to have received that morning a letter from an English woman, a great friend of ours. We chose this for our test, as it was absolutely impossible that Fräulein Oesterreicher could know our friend. Even now she does not know her name. One glance at the letter was sufficient and almost at once Fräulein Oesterreicher began. She was speaking, of course, in German. 'A woman's handwriting. She is of middle age and of great intelligence. There is here a combination of many intellectual qualities. She has a strong sense of duty and has had a many-sided education; is logical and has a great gift for friendship. She is excitable, but in exterior is very self-controlled. She is of middle height and holds herself erect. She has a bright appearance and has Northern eyes.'

This was extraordinary. Every word was correct. At no time did Fräulein Oesterreicher read any part of the letter. She knows but little English and could certainly not have read any part of this rather hurriedly written letter in the time. In fact she said it often helped her to see a letter upside-down. Occasional glances at the first page of our friend's letter were sufficient. Our friend seemed not only to be standing before her, but to be confiding in her.

'This woman is married and has a son. She is very occupied and sometimes worried over this son.' This again was entirely true.

Then Fräulein Oesterreicher reverted to our friend's character. 'She has a religious outlook on life. She finds it difficult to compromise. She is strongly attached to the truth, and to what she thinks is right. In matters of the spirit she is ambitious. This does not lead her into vanity, but is a perpetual urge in her to go forward. She has much love for music and takes great pleasure in form and beauty. She is a slender woman and has a very penetrating look. The movements of her hands are sparing, but very plastic. The hands themselves are interesting. She has a gift for speaking. She has travelled a great deal.'

Towards the end came a remarkable statement. 'She has built within herself a very vivid picture of her mother. Her relations to her mother have never been worked out; and this undeveloped relationship and the picture she has formed are very important factors in her life.' In fact our friend is an adopted child, and has seen nothing of her real mother since babyhood.

One more remark of Fräulein Oesterreicher's, slight but indicative of marvellous powers of perception: 'This woman loves blue colours.' This I did not know. I turned to my wife and she nodded that this too was absolutely true.

Finally Fräulein Oesterreicher added: 'She has sensitive lungs and the climate in which she lives is not good for her. She needs much warmth and sunshine.'

During all this my wife and I sat spell-bound. One can understand a graphologist being able to report that our friend is intellectual and logical, that she is well educated and so on. But from a mere glimpse of the handwriting to be able to say that she is married and has a son, that there was something unusual in the relations with her mother, that she loves blue colours, this seemed and still seems incredible. And every word uttered in the analysis was perfectly true.

We both felt that Fräulein Oesterreicher could have said a great deal more; that, in fact, nothing was concealed from her. I asked Fräulein Oesterreicher whether this was so, and without answering directly she inferred that this was so. 'One must only tell what helps,' she said. -In all that I have seen and heard of Fräulein Oesterreicher this eager desire to use her gift for the assistance of others, and not for monetary reward, has been prominent. She is fired with an intense desire to help others.

Providence which has endowed her with this remarkable gift has happily also accompanied it by an unusual allowance of tact and human kindness. 'Your gift is terrible,' I said, awed at what she must know of those about whom she is consulted. 'Yes,' she replied, 'It is prodigiously dangerous (*ungeheuer gefährlich*). One must learn to suppress.' She told me of a woman who came to consult her about herself. Fräulein Oesterreicher saw in her handwriting signs of worry about her husband. A letter from the husband was shown and this revealed to Fräulein Oesterreicher clearly that he was living with another woman. The wife knew and suspected nothing—and as to this she left as wise as she came in.

I asked Fräulein Oesterreicher whether the scientific graphologist could do what she had done. The answer was that none of them, working as they do from the small detail to the big character, could possibly tell of a state of health or physical appearance or report upon the spiritual happiness of the writer. 'I see the whole picture,' she said.

Whether there is any scientific explanation of this extraordinary gift I cannot say, and I am not competent to classify it in any way. A few centuries ago she would probably have been burned as a witch. The main cause for surprise to-day is that her gift is not better known and more widely used. I cannot help thinking that if Fräulein Oesterreicher had been born an Englishwoman or an American, her fame would by now have been world-wide. But I gather that save in Sweden and Switzerland her gift is almost unknown outside Germany, and it is for this reason that (with her permission) I have ventured to write of her work here.

It will be well to add a short account of Fräulein Oesterreicher the woman.

Fräulein Oesterreicher is the daughter of a German General. Though she did not realise her gift until she was about eighteen years old, she knows now that it was born with her. As a child she cared nothing for playing with dolls. Her favourite amusement was to collect odd bits of letters, envelopes and so on. She would picture the writers to herself and invent (as she thought) stories about them. 'Bits of handwriting were my pictures,' she said to me when talking of her childhood. After leaving school Fräulein Oesterreicher studied music. She has become a well-known violinist, and has toured Europe as a member of the Schuster-Woldan Quartette. It is typical of her to-day, when she could turn her gift into a fortune, that she earns her living mainly by playing and teaching the violin. She is absolutely above all sordid considerations and lives the simple, severe and unpretentious life of the post-war intellectual classes in Germany.

During the horrible inflation months of 1923 Fräulein Oesterreicher lost her capital and was obliged to take seriously the question of earning her living. She continued her music, but she realised too that she must develop her gift as graphologist. So seven years ago she began to study psychology deeply and to let her gift be known. A woman with a business instinct would quickly have worked up a well-paying connection as consultant. Fräulein Oesterreicher does work for clients and gives reports when asked for. She has worked for banks and business concerns, advising them mainly upon the suitability of new entrants to their staffs. She is also consulted privately by parents in regard to their children and by lovers as to their intended husbands or wives. When telling me this, she added with a twinkle that the lover-consultants seldom acted upon her advice, and I sympathised with them, for

if we cannot trust our own judgment when embarking on matrimony we had better remain single.

To most of us it will seem incredible that gifted as she is, able to help so greatly in such innumerable ways, Fräulein Oesterreicher is still more a musician than a *graphologin*. And what shows the inspiring, uncommercial type of woman she is more than anything else is the fact that she has for three years devoted much of her time to helping voluntarily one of Germany's leading criminal-psychologists. This man is a champion of reform in the treatment of criminals, a doughty critic of the present German penal code and a co-worker in the preparation of the new one. He studies criminals in their prisons, tries to ascertain what it has been in them that has brought them to their crime and how best they can be reconciled to their social surroundings when their punishment is done. Fräulein Oesterreicher introduced me to this ardent Law and Prison reformer, and we talked long on the points that our lives and work have in common. He was loud in his praise of the help that Fräulein Oesterreicher gives him with her handwriting analyses.

One can understand why this side of graphology fascinates Fräulein Oesterreicher. 'Work among criminals is so interesting,' she told me, 'for one can say all.' The report is not going to the prisoner, but to the criminal-psychologist, and there is thus no occasion for reserve or tact.

Since meeting Fräulein Oesterreicher I have often pondered over the vast uses to which the gifts of an intuitive graphologist could be put. Take my own work as an example. A police-court magistrate has to decide every day whether a guilty man before him can safely be treated leniently by probation or whether he has shown really criminal instincts which are better dealt with by the prison authorities. He has to ask himself: 'Is this man likely to benefit from leniency and refrain from getting into trouble again, or will he despise leniency and regard it as a sign of weakness?' We do all that we can to get help in making up our minds; police-court missionaries, relatives, employers, and so on are called in aid to report upon the convicted man. How enormously helpful would it be if someone with Fräulein Oesterreicher's gift could be at hand to report, not as to guilt, but as to his treatment when found guilty.

This is but one example as to how intuitive graphology would benefit mankind. There would be countless others. What a

marvellous Civil Service or Judicial Bench we should have, for instance, if all public appointments were made after receipt of such an analysis from Fräulein Oesterreicher as we received about our friend. But unfortunately this gift of Fräulein Oesterreicher's is rare. I asked her if she knew of anyone else who possessed it, and she told me that she only knew of one, also a German. Strangely enough, for intuition is far more marked in women than in men, he is a man, and he only discovered his talent in middle age, up to which time he was engaged in commercial life.

But one of the many strange features in connection with Fräulein Oesterreicher is that with this wonderful power she is not so overwhelmed with work that she has to turn her back for ever on music. To-day, as I have said, she is more violinist than graphologist. That seems to indicate a lack of appreciation on the part of the public as well as a personal modesty, which is, however, one of the best guarantees of her inherent worth.



### THE DISCIPLE OF BAREN GHOSE.

THE last embers of the wood fire on the sunbaked mud floor of the veranda glowed in the darkness. A battered hurricane lantern, dim and smoky, placed at the top of the courtyard steps, furnished the only other point of light. Outside the night, black as only an Indian night can be, brooded over all things. The heat, moist and oppressive, hung heavy like a pall. One could almost feel the silence, as if the earth lay stricken, waiting for the coming storm. Oppression was in the air. It was the end of the hot weather and the rains were near. For many weeks the pale brown earth had lain, cracked and parched, waiting for the breaking of the first storm-cloud to awaken it to new life. For days now the rains had been overdue, but hour after hour they held off and the scorching earth lay mocked.

Rajendra Chandra Mitra, first-year student at the far-off University of Calcutta, sat cross-legged at the edge of the veranda, gazing out unseeingly into the night. But an hour before the courtyard had been full to overflowing and he had been the centre of interest. Only that day he had returned home for the first time since he left the village for the university a year ago, and all the neighbours, curious to see and hear of his doings, had gathered in the little courtyard. Truly it was a subject for gossip. It was a thing unheard of hitherto in Rampurghat for a ryot's son to leave the village and gain admission to the great University of Calcutta. Few had ever left the village, even to seek other and better employment than Rampurghat could give. The idea of bettering themselves, with all the restlessness entailed, that was so obsessing a certain section of their fellow-country men, had not yet broken in upon the even tenor of their way. Contentment still reigned, dull and lethargic it might be, yet as Rajendra Chandra Mitra was now dimly realising, embodying something that might be enviable.

Strange and unexpected thoughts were coming to him now that the gossiping crowd of neighbours had gone and he sat alone. While they filled the courtyard, pressing round him with much talk, he had known pride and elation, enjoying the new experience of being the centre of interest in his own home. But as one by one they had

departed, leaving the courtyard empty, a curious depression that he could not understand had fallen upon him. First his father and mother and then his two brothers had retired to rest, falling asleep on the *charpoy*s that lay along the further wall of the veranda almost as soon as they had drawn their cloths, shroud-like, around them and laid their heads upon their tiny round pillows. He had lain down, but sleep would not come. Thoughts chased one another through his brain in bewildering fashion. Every nerve seemed on edge. Never in his life had he known what sleeplessness meant. Now he felt as if he would never sleep again. Every faculty was wide awake, yet he could not think clearly. It was as if something were racing in his brain. The deep breathing of his brothers, fast asleep close by, drove him to madness. The air was stifling. Weary of tossing from side to side, and wooing the sleep that would not come, he had risen from his *charpoy* and seated himself on the edge of the veranda, his back to one of the supporting columns. Sitting there, the thoughts that had been racing so tumultuously through his brain seemed slowly to sort themselves out and weave new and strangely vivid pictures before his eyes. It was as if he were seeing many things for the first time. He had gone on blindly. Now he could see, dimly it was true and without full understanding, but the new visions were there, only waiting for his dazed brain to comprehend them. The world he had known through all his eighteen years had suddenly to-night toppled about him. He must clear away the debris and see whither the new thoughts led. More than once a nameless fear gripped him and he shrank back from these stark thoughts that came to him. He felt now as he had felt not long since when he had gained his first experience of the sea. He had gone with other students on a trip from Calcutta to Chittagong by boat. He would never forget his feelings when the great delta of the Ganges slowly opened out into the infinitely greater sea, and the ship that at first had loomed so huge and safe an affair shrank into a tiny cockle-shell on the limitless expanse of water. Fear had gripped him then, an awful horror of space, the tiny boat tossed at the mercy of the waves, no human soul beside themselves in sight. A prey to panic he had rushed below and thrown himself upon his berth. Then slowly as time passed and the good ship ploughed gaily through the waters, he, for very shame and stung by their laughter, had joined his comrades at their midday meal. It had been something new to him and he had not understood. With understanding his courage had returned and he remembered



how, grown accustomed on the voyage back, he strode the deck and laughed at his previous fears. It was like that now. For the moment, faced by new thoughts he was at sea, frightened of what life might hold. There was so much that he had never realised. To-night things were presenting themselves to him at a different angle. He must think them out anew and gain the right perspective.

Sitting alone in the darkness, while the others slept, the one thing that most forcibly impressed itself upon him was the shock that his home-coming to-night had been to him. In the first flush of his arrival, the greetings of his parents and his brothers, the curiosity and gossip of the neighbours who had crowded in to see him, he had not had breathing space to analyse the feelings that even in those earliest moments had forced themselves upon him. All he had realised was that a great depression was stealing over him, that the joy of revisiting his home to which he had so long looked forward, was somehow falling short of his expectations. The exhilaration and delight he had anticipated were strangely wanting. Time and again during the evening he had roused himself trying to capture the satisfaction and contentment that eluded him. Always during the year at the university he had looked forward to returning home, to falling back into the old niche that he had occupied among familiar scenes and faces. He remembered what homesickness he had suffered during those first days in the hostel in Calcutta, and throughout the year the thought of home had been ever present with him as a thing of joy. Many a time he had pictured the first evening once more with the mother whose best-loved child he had always been, and with his father and elder brothers who till a year ago had represented the only manhood he had intimately known.

Now the first evening in the old home after a year's absence had come and gone. He could not hide from himself his bitter disappointment. Alone at last face to face with his own thoughts the truth was coming home to him with a force that stunned him. Why had this first evening amidst his own kin fallen so far short of his expectations? Everything was just as he had always known it. His father and mother, his brothers and neighbours, the homestead and surroundings, had not changed. Something had happened that he could not explain. He glanced towards the dim outlines on the *charpoy*s on which his brothers were sleeping, heavily and soundly. There had opened a great gulf between him and them. He had been conscious of it in the first moments of their meeting. Before,

he had always looked up to them as older and wiser than himself. They had exercised the elder brother's privilege and taken the lead in everything. They had always in kindly fashion domineered over him and he had always had for them a feeling half of awe, half of admiration. Now, the moment he met them after a year's absence he knew that that awe and admiration had gone, never to return. He could almost laugh at the thought that they had ever existed. They were just dull village clods with no ideas, no thoughts outside the drab routine of their daily lives. He had realised with a shock that he had nothing to say to them, and that he was irrevocably out of touch with them and that the things that now interested him, and that were a part of his daily life, would be beyond the limits of their comprehension. The only question his eldest brother had asked had been as to the food and air of Calcutta. Was the water good? and at what price was rice selling? Beyond these things his mind did not reach. His other brother was no better. The only thing that seemed to interest him in the life of Calcutta was the Zoological Gardens. His passion for animals had carried him thus far and no farther. His father had listened stolidly to the story of his College life, but he had offered no remark. His mother had not even listened. She had been too busy with the evening meal. He knew he could tell her nothing of the interests that absorbed him now. She would not understand them. His depression grew as he thought of his mother. Only a year ago she had been to him the chief object in the world. The youngest of the family, he had been her special pride and joy. She had served him hand and foot, but expecting and obtaining from him in return implicit obedience. It was she who ruled the house, not his easy-going father who spent his life in the fields, asking only a good meal and undisturbed repose, when he returned at sunset, tired with the long day's work. Husband and three sons had done her bidding unquestioningly. It was only now that he remembered and understood these things. All his life he had taken them for granted. He had been a part of them. Now for the first time he was looking at them from outside, as a stranger. He was no longer a part of them. In some strange unaccountable way he had outgrown them.

Again he looked at the shrouded figures of his brothers on their *charpoys*. A year ago he had been like them, sleeping the heavy sleep of the physically tired labourer. Now he was sitting wide awake thinking as he had never thought before, seeing things as

he had never seen them hitherto. Though still their brother, so near to them in the flesh, he was in reality poles asunder from them. A great wave of depression swept over him as he thought of it, a sense of loneliness seizing him with something of the same panic he had felt when for the first time he had been to sea. He was frightened. Just as when he had seemed to stand alone physically on board the ship, surrounded by the waste of water that separated him from the rest of the world, so now he seemed suddenly to be terribly alone, isolated even in the very midst of his own family and home. He half-rose from his sitting posture in the sudden access of his fear. With a swift look over his shoulder as if he half-expected it to take visible shape, he sank back again limply, his head falling forward on his knees. How was it that he had become different from the rest of his family? A year ago he had not been conscious of any difference at all between himself and his brothers. True he had remained at school longer than they, had acquired more education than they had ever done, but he had never ceased to be the younger brother, had never realised that his studies were forming a gulf between them that could never be bridged. Now in the sudden access of terror at his loneliness and isolation he cursed the day that he had pleaded to be allowed to continue his studies and the scholarship he had gained thereby that had carried him on to the University of Calcutta. Why had his father allowed him to go? Why had he sacrificed much of his life's savings to help him towards his B.A.? Wild nightmare thoughts raced through his brain. It had been all a mistake. If only he could get back. If only he could be one of them again and take up the daily round of life that was all they asked, to which he had been born. What was he, a peasant's son, doing at the university? It was as if his own family had outcasted him. Did they know what they had done? Did they, any of them, father, mother, brothers, realise the gulf that had opened out between them? or were they, who remained as they had always been, unconscious of it? Had his home-coming been the bitter disillusionment to them that it had been to him?

The darkness of the night was lifting. The hurricane lantern at the top of the steps had smoked more feebly and gone out. The hush that comes before the dawn lay upon the sleeping world. Even the birds had ceased to twitter and the cicada had folded her wings. So all-pervading was the silence that it seemed at last to force itself upon the consciousness of the huddled figure on the

veranda. Raising his head with a quick surprised movement Rajendra glanced around him as if taking in his surroundings anew. The first grey haze that had succeeded the blackness of the night made them just visible.

The sight of them brought back a rush of thoughts from which he shrank. Everywhere there were signs of his mother's handiwork, that mother whom he had always looked upon with reverence and affection. Now it seemed as if he could only see her as a haggard old woman, unlovely and ill-tempered, with a shrewish voice. He bent his head lower as the hateful thoughts beat themselves into his brain. It was horrible. It was desecration. Yet try as he would, he could not blot those fantastic pictures from his mind. Great sobs shook him. With a passionate longing he desired to get back to where he had been a year ago, to be one of them again peacefully sleeping, untroubled by thoughts beyond the daily round. Surely that was easiest and best, to do as they did, to take each day as it came and to ask nothing further of life. He would never go back to Calcutta. He would stay here and recover the peace of mind that he had lost. He would become one with his family again. He would forget all his ambitions, thrust aside all the strange temptations that had come to him and listen no more to the call of the new doctrines and political beliefs that were pressing so closely round him in Calcutta.

But even as the resolve came to him he knew that it was impossible of fulfilment. He could never get back. He could never again be the same as he was before, one with the brothers whose outlook was limited by the common daily tasks of village life. His brain seemed suddenly to swing round and show him the very opposite side of the picture. There was his work, the work that he loved, leading up to the final realisation of his dream of a university degree. He had become one of the great company of students whose chief object in life was to obtain that degree. To them it had become the one thing necessary, so much so that, failing to pass it, they clung to the fact that they had read up to it and sat for the examination, by calling themselves 'Failed B.A.' He was back again in imagination among his fellow-students taking part with them in work and play. He loved it all, the comradeship, the zest, the varied interests. He had done well in his examinations. He was considered one of the most promising students of the year. For sports of all kinds he had a natural proclivity, Football was his special game, and next year, almost for certain.

he would be captain of his team. He remembered how, when earlier in the evening he had spoken of football, his father and mother and brothers had not understood what he meant. They had never so much as heard of the game. With something of a shock he realised that a year ago he himself knew nothing of it. Now it was a passion with him and he had explained it eagerly to his family. But they had shown little interest. Tennis and cricket, too, were unknown to them. No one had ever played such things in Rampurghat. It was odd how little was known of them here, and how great a place they held in the life of Calcutta. In every direction the gulf between himself and home had widened. To live without games now would be unthinkable.

Then last of all his thoughts came reluctantly to the great matter that had been agitating him as the last term had drawn to a close. It seemed to him now as he sat in the growing dawn that he was always subconsciously fighting against this thought and that always in the end it was winning and forcing itself upon him. Swiftly his mind went back to its first beginnings. Baren Ghose was a graduate of some ten years' standing and Rajendra in all the simplicity of his country-bred youth had met him the first day of his arrival in Calcutta. Baren with his seniority, his knowledge of the world, his wonderful gift of eloquence could not have failed to impress a new-comer, especially one coming from such untutored surroundings as Rajendra. He well remembered that first meeting. He had arrived in Calcutta after a long two days' journey early in the morning, and during the day had struck up an acquaintance with another first-year student, who though no older than himself in years far outstripped him in knowledge of the world, having lived in Calcutta all his life. That very first evening he had asked him to go with him to a debate at a private debating society, and Rajendra flattered at the invitation and knowing nothing of these things had gone with him. To-night, sitting in the old home, it all seemed like a dream. The scene was there before him again and the impassioned words of the chief speaker rang in his ears. The meeting had been held in an inner courtyard of one of these enormous rambling old houses that are one of the features of certain quarters of Calcutta. Damp and dilapidated, with moss-grown walls and broken ornamentation, most of them are sad reminders of a great day gone. The meeting had been after sunset, and a dirty gas lamp and a few hurricane lanterns had been the only illumination, serving but to make the darkness visible and adding

to the air of desolation. The courtyard had been full to overflowing, the audience mostly students like himself, sitting cross-legged on the ground, listening intently with occasional murmurs of applause as the speaker facing them poured forth a flood of eloquence. Standing directly under the gas-lamp, the light had fallen full on his face, revealing every fleeting expression of his mobile features as he spoke. From enthusiasm and confidence he had passed swiftly to anger, indignation and contempt, each emotion expressed in voice, features and gesture with unerring instinct and real dramatic skill. The words poured from him in one inexhaustible torrent. Tall and gaunt, his eyes ablaze, he dominated his audience, and Rajendra had quickly fallen under his spell. But it was rather the mesmerism of the man himself than the words he was uttering that had held him. To Rajendra the words meant little. They were altogether beyond him. He had never in his life before heard such talk. What did it all mean? What actually was it that was rousing the speaker's wrath and indignation and contempt? To what was he inciting his hearers? To Rajendra the British Raj had always stood for something vague and indefinable, but at the same time something great and strong and unassailable. He could scarcely believe that he heard aright when this impassioned speaker, here in the very heart of the British capital, poured out violent invective against it and all its doings. What was it all about? He remembered how dazed and confused he had felt as the speaker's torrent of words flowed on and how finally his brain, weary with the effort of trying to grasp the meaning of it all, had ceased to work and he had dozed sleepily, only to awake with a start as the voice rising to a crescendo of declamation stopped with dramatic suddenness. A burst of clapping had followed, and a few moments later as the meeting broke up he had found himself being introduced to the speaker. From the first moment that they met Rajendra had been conscious of some curious personal influence emanating from this man. Shy and strange to a gathering of this sort, he had felt tongue-tied, yet Baren had quickly put him at ease. He had shown a personal interest in him that could not but flatter the country youth. That this man who had a moment ago held his audience spell-bound with his eloquence, and who was evidently a leader amongst his fellows, should turn aside to evince an interest in such a humble person as himself, was to him a thing of wonder. That in itself necessarily counted for much, but there was in the man himself something that drew Rajen-



dra instinctively to him. Thinking of that first meeting now a year ago he tried to remember what it was in the man that had so impressed him. He could still see him standing in the glare of the dirty gas-lamp in the fast-emptying courtyard speaking to him, Rajendra the unknown youth from the mofussil, with the same force and the same earnestness that had kept the attention of his audience a moment before. The man who had just held a crowd of listeners was now focussing all his powers upon this one youth. Rajendra was too guileless to realise that this was the man's great stock-in-trade, this gift of magnetising every youth with whom he came in contact and drawing each within the net of his political schemes. He had concentrated all his arts on Rajendra, and Rajendra had fallen an easy prey. It was only that in this case Baren had followed up his first effort. There was something in the youth that had appealed to him, his freshness and utter guilelessness and evident intelligence, his fine physique and manly presence. They might all be turned to useful account. Here was virgin soil and upon it Baren Ghose determined to impress his own personality. Here was a disciple worthy of him, and to his dominant nature it appealed to make him his devoted follower. Rajendra had had no chance against him. His very first night in Calcutta, amidst strange scenes he had fallen easily under the other's influence. Looking back it seemed to Rajendra that Baren Ghose had dominated his whole life throughout the past year. It was curious, sitting in his own home hundreds of miles away, how different everything appeared. It seemed to him now that he had never during all this last year stopped to consider things. He had just been swept along by events, so engulfed in his work and play and politics that he had never had time to pause and think. He had worked hard. He had done well in his examinations. He had played hard and had enjoyed his games to the full. But looking back upon it now it was not these things that stood out. It was Baren Ghose who dominated the scene. He had never realised it before as he did now.

A year ago he had known nothing of politics. Now thanks to Baren he was in the thick of them. All the past year he had gloried in them, always learning some new thing, seeing some new point. He had become the most enthusiastic of Baren's followers. Mother India! The idea of all that those words meant had been dimly born that first evening in Calcutta, to be rapidly developed under his leader's fostering care. Clothed in the eloquent words

of the master, the thought had loomed as a magnificent conception before the eyes of the country lad. To free his mother country from the foreign yoke! Could there be any idea more likely to appeal to the youthful mind? It had influenced Rajendra and swept him off his feet in those first days in Calcutta. On every side in his little circle he heard this great idea discussed. It was one of the chief topics of conversation in the students' mess, scarcely disguised even in the presence of the English priests whose gift the hostel was. In the debating societies it had been openly discussed and plans laid for achieving the great end. Constitutional Government, democratic institutions, dominion status were brushed aside as time-worn shibboleths of an older generation. There must be complete independence. The English must be turned out of India. India must be for the Indian alone.

Rajendra suddenly shivered. The touch of the cool air that comes often with the dawn even in the midst of the hottest season of the year seemed almost cold by contrast with the heat of the night. He drew his *dhoti* closer round him. The others would soon be awake and he had not thought out half his thoughts. There was the other side. There was Father Paul, his chief friend at the Mission, and all that he stood for. He realised it now. He had been living two lives during the past year. Side by side with his life with Baren and his political schemes, and yet completely separated from it, there had been his life at the hostel and his friendship with Father Paul. Instinctively he had never even so much as mentioned Baren Ghose to Father Paul. Why had he not done so? He had discussed most things with him, but his own active association with politics he had hidden. Father Paul with all his charity and broadmindedness would surely have disapproved of Baren's schemes. He could see and understand it all now. Father Paul would take his stand on fair dealing and straightforward action. He would be willing to hand over their country to the Indians as soon as he considered them fit to govern it. Baren Ghose said they were fit to govern it now, but that the English intended to hold on to it and lied when they said that the Indians were not fit to govern themselves. Who was right? His brain was in a whirl again as snatches of conversation with Father Paul and Baren Ghose came back to him, utterly contradictory and opposed to one another. These two, both strong, capable men, were at the opposite ends of the pole in thought and feeling. How was he, a country lad, completely ignorant of these things till



a few months ago, to decide between them ? His brain seemed to refuse to work any more and his head fell forward on his arms again despairingly.

Soon the stirring to life of a new day engulfed him and perforce he fell back into the common daily round, that until a year ago was all he had ever known. But always now, though he took part in the old daily routine, he felt apart from it. A terrible loneliness gnawed at his heart. He was no longer one of them. He was a stranger in his father's house. Never again could he take up the old familiar life. Something had entered into him and robbed him of the joy and contentment of old days. Then he had accepted everything as he had always known it. Now he had passed beyond such things, and there was no return. The month that he spent among the old scenes in his father's house seemed endless. Hating himself for it, he yet longed for it to end. Each day as it passed seemed to estrange him further from his own folk and his old life. Restless and unhappy, he strove his utmost to conceal his feelings from his family. He wondered greatly that apparently they noticed nothing. They seemed unconscious of the gulf that to him yawned so visibly between them. Their failure to perceive and understand him estranged him yet further. As the month drew to its close he often wanted to scream with the effort to control and hide his feelings. Almost he hated and despised them, these his nearest in blood and kin, that they were so dense and stupid, that they noticed nothing.

The month was over at last and he was back again in the hostel in Calcutta. From the first moment he arrived there was no doubt where his chief interest in the great city lay. It was to Baren Ghose that his thoughts turned. He would always remember the joy of seeing him again, the eagerness of his welcome, the strange happiness of feeling himself again in close accord with another human being. For a month he had lived in the midst of his family, yet more alone than he had ever been in his life. Now his whole soul leapt out to greet another soul, and he felt himself enclosed and encompassed with a great spirit of sympathy and understanding.

Rapidly Baren outlined to him all that had happened during his month's absence. Plans had advanced. The time had almost come. Soon they would actually begin the great work they had been so long planning. He, Rajendra Chandra Mitra, was needed. Subtly he played upon the feelings of the novice.

They were standing before the open window of Baren's room,

looking out across the square into the starlit night. Baren's hand fell gently on the young man's shoulder.

'We need the help of such men as you,' he said, with the seductive smile that had won him so many adherents. 'And you above all. You will be a leader in the days to come.'

Rajendra turned, flushed with pride, and looked into the smiling face beside him. And as he looked his heart grew prouder. To be the chosen of such a man as this was surely one of the greatest gifts the gods could give. The thin ascetic face glowed with enthusiasm in the moonlight as he unfolded more and more of the plans he and his followers were perfecting. The salvation of the Motherland was near at hand. Mother India would soon be free from her oppressors, rescued by her loyal sons, whom she would reward in full measure. As he spoke, and from vague generalisations drew nearer to concrete plans, Rajendra listened with absorbed interest, the words falling with telling effect upon the soil that the speaker himself had so carefully prepared during the last twelve months. Expert as he was in playing upon human emotions, he realised that never before in all his experience had he found more fertile soil to work upon. The boy was completely in his hands. It might be that the actual plans intended would come as something of a shock to the country lad, but carefully handled, as he intended to handle him, there need be no fear. Bombs and murders were ugly words and to-night he must skirt skilfully around them. The youth was too fresh from his old home influences to risk their mention, but time pressed and he must draw as near as he could.

'I foresee a great future before you,' he went on with the curious mystic voice and manner that seldom failed of their effect. 'I foresee you ordained to do great things for the Motherland. It may be that they will be things that you had not dreamed of, things that, had you not had the training it has been my privilege to give you these last few months, you might have shrunk from. Now you will realise that everything is permissible in our efforts to free the Motherland. Everything. It is a large word, but until one can say it freely, generously, with one's whole heart, one is not yet worthy to serve the Mother.'

'I am ready,' answered Rajendra eagerly. 'You shall not find me wanting.'

Baren smiled at the ardour he had aroused.

'Only through sacrifice can we obtain our goal,' he continued. 'The individual must sacrifice himself, the individual must be

sacrificed for the good of the whole. What is one life compared with the welfare of India? That her teeming millions may obtain their freedom? What matters our own puny personal existence? Fortunate indeed should we count ourselves that we are privileged to sacrifice ourselves, that through us our country may find salvation.'

'Yes, yes,' said the boy, as the other paused, 'I understand. I will answer when the call comes.'

For a long time, these two, the scheming fanatic and the country lad, stood talking, the spirit of the one passing so completely into the spirit of the other that their entities seemed to merge.

It was late when Rajendra reached the hostel that night. It lay dark and silent in the moonlight, and he saw no sign of life as he hastily entered the courtyard and ran up the veranda steps. The silence was oppressive and suddenly he felt afraid. At the top of the steps he halted, wondering at himself, startled at the sudden fear that had come to him. Why was it that he felt afraid? Suddenly he jumped as if he had been shot. Were his ears deceiving him or was someone in reality calling his name? He stood still, his face blanched in the moonlight. He could hear his heart pounding against his chest. Why was he so afraid? Roughly he shook himself free from the fear that gripped him, and looked along the veranda. Again he heard his name called softly. This time there could be no mistake. He wheeled round quickly and saw Father Paul leaning over the veranda that ran in front of his room in the far corner of the courtyard. For a moment he stood looking up at him. His first instinct was one that surprised himself, the instinct to turn and run away. He could not have explained it. Father Paul had been his best friend in the hostel and a quiet talk with him had been one of his greatest delights during his first year at the university. Now his instinct was suddenly to avoid him. Why was it? But whatever he might have wished to do he saw it was impossible to avoid meeting him without marked discourtesy. Father Paul was descending the steps to meet him, his tall athletic figure moving with its usual quick decision and vigour.

'It is good to see you back again,' he said, taking Rajendra by the hand and smiling affectionately at him. Warm-hearted and genial, Father Paul possessed one sure passport to the hearts of the students among whom he worked. He had the great gift of concentration, of devoting all his thoughts and interests for the moment to the person to whom he spoke.

But to-night Rajendra felt strangely ill at ease. Here was an

influence altogether at variance with the influence from which he had just come. He could not have defined it, but he knew it instinctively. Never before had he felt this shyness in Father Paul's presence. Always he had been full of life and talk. Now he was tongue-tied, answering in monosyllables the kindly questions as to his doings during the vacation, scarce knowing what he was saying.

'The second year is always the test,' Father Paul was saying. 'You are just beginning it. Don't miss the best.'

He spoke to him of his football and of the chance of his being chosen captain of his team, but still Rajendra, who at other times would have been stirred with pleasure at a talk over such things with Father Paul, hung back. He wanted desperately to break through the barrier that seemed to him to have risen between them, but he could not. His mind was in a tumult. Wild thoughts came to him of telling Father Paul everything and asking his advice. But he knew he could not. And Father Paul, quick to see that all was not well, but knowing youth and believing it best, forbore to question him then. He would watch the boy carefully and try to fathom what was passing in his mind. In after days he bitterly regretted that no other opportunity had ever come.

Thereafter events moved with strange rapidity to their appointed end. Rajendra Chandra Mitra, the country youth with only one year's experience of life, was but a rudderless craft embarked upon a stormy sea. The next day word came to him from Baren Ghose that he expected him at his rooms the following night. It was only such a summons as he had received a dozen times, but as he walked to keep the tryst he had a strange presentiment of some untoward fate awaiting him. More than once he hesitated, half-inclined to turn back, but the fatalism of his race urged him on. It was as if a magnet drew him and he followed unresistingly. Of what happened that evening he had but a confused impression afterwards. He had been quickly justified of the presentiment that had gripped him by the way. It was evident that it was a solemn conclave that was being held in Baren's rooms that night. He found a little group of eleven men seated in a circle, cross-legged on the floor.

'Here is the twelfth,' said Baren, rising as Rajendra entered and carefully locking the door behind him. Then he drew a heavy curtain across the doorway and putting his hand upon Rajendra's shoulder turned towards the circle of his other friends.

'There is no need for names to-night,' he said, 'but I can answer for the loyalty of my friend here.'

Then holding Rajendra a little away from him, he turned and faced him.

'Can I not, my friend?' he asked, smiling down at him in the old familiar way that had never failed to find a response in Rajendra's heart.

'Yes,' he answered simply.

The smile slowly fading from off his face, he asked Rajendra to take the oath of loyalty, and Rajendra, his head in a whirl, repeated the words after him, scarcely realising what he was saying. Awed by the solemnity of the gathering he took the vacant seat in the circle indicated by Baren. For a space of time that seemed ages to Rajendra with his nerves taut, no one spoke. The dim light from the oil-lamp flickered over the solemn faces round the circle. Rajendra did not know one of them. They were all complete strangers to him. There was not one of the many that he had met hitherto in Baren's rooms. The strangeness of the gathering, unlike any he had previously attended, chilled him. What did it all portend?

Baren had been speaking for several minutes before Rajendra had grasped what he was saying. The very life seemed to ebb out of him when at last the substance of it beat into his brain.

The time had come. They were met together to make a beginning of their great campaign. A reign of terror was to be inaugurated. This little gathering was to light a spark that should end in the overthrow of the great British Raj. With high-flown words and grandiloquent gestures Baren painted an impassioned picture that made each one of his eleven hearers see himself a hero, destined to save his Mother India from the foreign yoke. Gradually Rajendra forgot his feeling of awe, his erstwhile desire to draw back. He was swept away, carried completely out of himself. Even when at the end of the fiery speech Baren came to the point and with dramatically lowered voice disclosed the fact that the first bomb had been prepared, that it had been decided that the hated Chief Commissioner of Police should be the first to be removed and, further, that they would now proceed to draw lots to decide to whom should fall the honour of being the instrument to throw it, Rajendra was so worked up that he felt no recoil. It was only as a book was produced with twelve slips of paper hanging out of the pages, apparently all the same length, that he experienced the first shock. Each

in turn was to draw out one of the slips of paper from the book and he who drew out the longest was the chosen one.

Silence fell upon the little group as Baren rose and paused before the man on his right, offering him the book with the twelve slips protruding from it. Slowly the man pulled out one of the slips. It was a long one, and as the others watched, it seemed as if it would never come to an end and emerge from between the pages. It must have gone almost the full length of the book. The man's hand shook as he drew it slowly out and his face grew grey.

It was only with difficulty that the others refrained from signs of relief. Surely that slip was the longest of the twelve.

One by one the others took their slips, laying them on the floor in front of them. All of them were much shorter than the first. Rajendra watched fascinated as Baren, holding out the book, drew near to him. The man next to him had drawn the shortest slip of all. Baren was now facing him and smiling down at him with his old confident smile. Rajendra summoned all his fortitude. He must not fail in Baren's eyes. Slowly he too raised his hand and hesitating a moment, chose a slip among the five that remained. But as he drew it his heart seemed to stand still. Was it his imagination or was it in reality the longest of them all? It seemed endless as he drew, and as with shaking hand he laid it on the floor in front of him a movement of interest and excitement passed round the group. Each man peered forward to discover if it was longer than the first. Only Rajendra himself dared not look. He had no need to look. He knew that it was the longest slip, the longest that the book could hold.

Baren had passed on to the remaining three men, but their drawing was a farce. The longest slip had already been drawn.

Slowly Baren resumed his place in the circle with the last slip in his hand. Rajendra tried wildly to collect his thoughts. Great waves of horror swept over him. He scarcely heard Baren's voice saying that the gods had chosen him, Rajendra, as their instrument, and that to him had fallen the honour of striking the first blow for Mother India. Again the oath was administered to each one of them, and Rajendra, dazed and half-uncomprehending, was taken aside and given his instructions. That nothing might be left to chance he was then taken at once to the spot just in front of the Secretariat where, every morning, the open car of the Chief Commissioner of Police drew up at a certain hour. All Rajendra had to do was to throw the bomb as the Sahib alighted. There could



be no mistaking the car. Always there was a Police orderly on the front seat and a little flag flying on the bonnet of the car.

That night Rajendra spent in an agony of distress. There was nothing he could do. It was impossible to go to Father Paul as he wildly longed to do and tell him all and ask his advice. Even if he had not been still under Baren's influence he could not have done so. He was bound by his oath. He could not escape.

He was early astir the following morning and as in a dream walked the streets. He could not meet Father Paul or any of his classmates. A dull sullen acceptance of his fate was settling down upon him. At nine o'clock, as arranged, he went to Baren's rooms. Baren was waiting for him and greeted him eagerly and Rajendra noted with something of surprise that it was Baren who was the more excited of the two. Taking the bomb with a last parting word from Baren he hurried out into the street, the bomb hidden in his *dhoti*. He was curiously unmoved now. This hard ball, quite small, the size of a cricket ball, held close against his body was capable of bringing death speedily. If it exploded while he held it, he would be blown to bits, yet the thought of it moved him strangely little. He must just carry out what he had to do. There was no choice and he made no question. Over and over again he repeated to himself exactly what he had to do. Baren Ghose had found in Rajendra Chandra Mitra an apt pupil.

It was now within ten minutes of the time that the Chief Commissioner of Police should approach the Secretariat. Rajendra had been particularly warned that he must not be seen to loiter. It was not till within three minutes of the hour that he walked slowly on the opposite side of the road past the place where the car would stop. Turning at the bend of the road his heart stood still. There was the car of the Chief Commissioner of Police approaching, slowing down behind a heavily laden bullock-cart. All the dull stupor into which he had fallen suddenly vanished. His brain reeled. He realised the full horror of what he was about to do. Yet there was no thought of drawing back. He felt irresistibly drawn towards that shining car, yet at the same time almost physically sick at the thought of the destruction he was to bring to it. Yet he did not waver. His hand feeling for the bomb that lay in the fold of his *dhoti*, he turned swiftly to cross the road and meet the car as it drew up at the appointed place. Darting out into the road, he did not see another car bearing down upon him from the opposite direction until with a cry, as it almost touched him, he leapt out of

its way. On the pavement on the further side of the road he fell heavily, and the bomb flung out of his hand with the force of the fall, dashed against the wall of the Secretariat a few yards away.

After the terrific explosion that startled the passers-by and could be heard all over that quarter of Calcutta, the Chief Commissioner of Police, jumping from his car which had just drawn up in its usual place, was the first to reach the prostrate figure on the pavement. There could be no doubt that it was he who had carried the bomb and the Chief Commissioner, even as he helped to lift the limp blood-stained figure, had little doubt that it was for himself the bomb had been intended.

It was seven hours later in the cool clean ward of the Central Hospital that Rajendra recovered consciousness. It was only slowly that life came back to him. For a long time he lay with closed eyes, afraid to open them, as if some heavy weight lay on them. He could feel that both his arms and both his legs and head were bandaged. The terrible explosion of the bomb still rang in his ears.

He opened his eyes at last and found himself looking straight into the eyes of Father Paul, who was bending over him. Quickly he closed his eyes again, a great wave of shame sweeping over him. He tried to turn as he lay, but sharp twinges of pain made him cry out. Father Paul's cool hand was on his forehead and his voice, seeming to come from a long way off, was speaking to him. He could not hear what it was he was saying. Waves of sound like the waves of the sea beating on the shore as he had heard them at Chittagong rang in his ears. But rising up through everything and absorbing his confused brain came one thought uppermost. He must speak. He must let Father Paul know.

Opening his eyes again he found the same kind face still bending over him. He struggled for speech, and it seemed as if it would not come. It was ghastly being unable to speak. What was it that was wrong with him? Fear gripped him, and his lips quivered, his eyes looking up appealingly into Father Paul's. He, thinking that perchance the boy was worried as to the damage the bomb had done, bent lower and reassured him.

'God was very merciful,' he said gently, 'the bomb hurt no one but yourself.'

But that was not what chiefly worried the boy. He shook his head feebly and struggled again for words. Father Paul bent lower, and at last his voice came clear and insistent.

'I didn't do it.'

Surprised at the words, Father Paul, who had bent his ear to catch them, drew back and gazed down into the boy's face. What was it that he meant?

The drawn face on the pillow was sharp and eager.

'I didn't do it,' he said again and the effort seemed to exhaust him, his eyes closing and a deeper pallor creeping over him.

Yet once again his lips murmured the words 'I didn't do it,' and this time the emphasis on the first word gave Father Paul the light he needed. He remembered one of their talks at the end of last term and the interest Rajendra had shown in a remark of his that sometimes one did things contrary to one's nature because one was obsessed or under undue influence. Surely this was the case with Rajendra. The shock of hearing that one of his favourite pupils had been found with a bomb had been great. He had never so much as suspected, though he had seen Rajendra daily. He had realised that something was worrying the boy, but that he had so completely fallen into the hands of the extremists he had had no suspicion. Bitterly he blamed himself for not having achieved the impossible. Now for over six hours, ever since he had heard of the tragedy, he had remained at the boy's bedside. Consciousness having come at last, he hurried out to fulfil his promise to inform the Civil Surgeon.

It was many days before Rajendra, maimed and crippled almost out of human form, was in a sufficiently fit state to be moved to the hospital in the Jail, and to be fully examined as to the occurrence. As soon as it was possible a day was fixed. On the morrow his removal would take place.

But when the morrow dawned, closely guarded though he had been in the hospital, he was found strangled, and with a dagger through his heart. His friends had decided that their own safety demanded this further sacrifice, since dead men tell no tales.

SHELLAND BRADLEY.

### OLD RETAINERS.

HAD I but leisure to write a description of things that have been, I would choose the distant years of boyhood when I lived in the country amid quiet, epichoriamal scenes, surrounded by those who had worked for my family nearly all their lives. For a new epoch has begun, and the hour is fast approaching, as country estates are sold and broken up, when the old retainer, as we used to know and love him, will be no more seen. Indeed, he belongs to the Present not at all. Events are moving too quickly for him. He required in those who employed him a certain stability of fortune and circumstance. To be able to look back upon thirty years or so of faithful service, and still forward in the same environment of financial security and social equilibrium, was indispensable to the rôle he played. To-day, however, nothing can be predicted with even reasonable probability more than a year or two ahead, and the last decade has been of so troublous and destructive a nature that continuity of service has become the exception rather than the rule.

What memories the words 'old retainer' conjure up—of pride in the tradition of the Family, care for its interests, affection, loyalty, zeal. Of those I have known hardly one now survives. They are all dead, buried in the crowded graveyard of our parish church. What inadequate memorials mark the spots where their bones lie!—a name and a couple of dates, and perhaps a text or line or two of verse. Is this the ultimate testimony to so much devoted service? Is this all that can be recorded of you—Martha, Tappitt, Dougal, Clara, Anderson, Nanny, Old Sam? Is this the only tale to be told of all those years of fidelity and disinterested toil? For you were built of heroic mould—quarrelsome, some of you, jealous, tiresome, at times impossible even, yet with the holy flame of love and duty burning within you all, duty done in every weather and love untarnished by a thought of gain.

'You will be the death of me,' I can recollect my mother saying, convulsed with laughter, to our old nurse, Harriet Ward, when she had perpetrated some terrific malapropism. Who can forget, who knew and loved her, that neat figure, four feet six in height, primly garbed in black? She lived to be eighty and was active almost to

the end. Indomitable little woman ! I can see you with your dark brown 'toupet' and rheumatic knuckles, deaf and a little blind, courageously cheerful, obstinate, conventional, uncompromising. She loved only us children, with a fierce, maternal love, and lavished all the resources of her heart and strength upon our needs and frolics. Foreigners she detested and despised ; the lower orders were dirt beneath her feet ; the children of others of inferior clay. Her little flame of life, that tiny lamp, fed by the oil of love, burnt for us and us alone. She lived with us for forty years, and for the last ten of them did small, self-imposed chores about the house, occasionally grumbling and perverse, ceaselessly busy and sometimes in the way. To tidy things, to put them away, to wrap them up in camphor-laden drawers and boxes, trunks and cupboards, to take care of them for Master this or Miss that and then utterly forget them, so that, if wanted at any time, they never could be found, was one of her chief occupations when she had ceased to be our nurse. Where she had been and in what exact capacity before she came to us, we were never able finally to determine, although, as children, we plied her with shamelessly direct questions and later on, more tactfully, would bring the conversation round to that undiscovered territory. But we never learnt anything definite of this shadowy past. Whatever her position may have been—and we gravely suspected from the slight look of discomfort in her face, when we spoke of it, that it may have been something very lowly—no autocrat could have brushed aside the opinions of others with more contempt, no Judge of the High Court shown more inflexibility of purpose and character and comported himself with greater dignity than this four feet and a half of domineering spinsterhood. To us she was as indulgent as a fairy godmother, but of the other domestics had scarcely a good word to say. They were idle and inefficient, all but the cook, and, had it not been for her own eternal vigilance, nothing according to her would ever have been done to time or even done at all. They laughed at her behind her back, were irritated at times, but could not help respecting her. As for us, we bullied and adored her. I remember her funeral. The coffin was as small as a little child's. Two men only bore it, and, as it was lowered into the ground, we stood and watched its disappearance, incredulous and misty-eyed, for it seemed to be the visible burial of all our early years.

I can see, too, a little, thick-set figure, bent double, weeding a garden path. It is Tappitt, the odd-man, who tends the cow and

pigs, sees to the gas plant, heats the boiler for the house, feeds the dog, looks after the poultry, clears away the kitchen refuse, brings in the wood and coals, fetches the heavy goods from the station, minds the pony that mows the lawn, et cetera, et cetera ; and is ever diligent, sweet-tempered and obliging, but a little serious withal and thoughtful, as though he were ruminating some problem of life. All this he has done for close on fifty years and is now an old man, beloved of everyone, and best of all by the beasts of the field. He will sit up all night with a sow that is going to litter or a cow that's expected to calve, not from necessity, but because he is irresistibly drawn to these inarticulate creatures, especially in their hours of crisis or suffering. They appeal to all that is tenderest in him. He is learned in the ways of pigs, all their idiosyncrasies and humours, forecasting their ailments, interpreting their grunts, anticipating their swinish needs. You should see the cow waiting to be milked, watching for the little man—he is barely five foot—and, when he arrives, looking at him out of her large soft eyes with bovine but intimate understanding. I recollect his three nights' vigil when the life of our dog, Sweep, had been despaired of, nursing him like a mother. Another time he took home a tame hare that was sick—his cottage was close to us in the Park—and kept it at his bedside for a whole week, coaxing it back to health and appetite. And yet he is a simple old fellow, with no education, able neither to read nor write, with no interests, seemingly, outside those of his daily tasks, and sparing of speech, although the best listener I have ever met. He belongs to the meek and humble of earth. Six or seven years ago he fell off a stack and broke his leg, a compound fracture, owing to the gross carelessness of another who was working alongside ; but he uttered no complaint, although he was cruelly hurt and took many months to recover. It was only on one occasion that I saw him deeply stirred. We were standing in the Park together on a broiling summer afternoon, when we noticed in the middle of the road that cut across it, and about fifty yards away, a small squatting body that looked like a rabbit. It turned out, however, on closer acquaintance to be—what do you think?—a fat, young dabchick ! Up it got as we approached, and began at its utmost speed to make off in the direction of a pond several hundreds of yards distant. Every thirty seconds or so it would sink down exhausted in the dust, then, after resting a little, renew what appeared to be this race against time to achieve the watery element that was its home.



Its progress was not so much a waddle as a fantastic and ungainly kind of jig, the legs jerking with frantic rapidity in all directions, a large part of the effort being quite ineffectual for the purpose of advancement, just as on the music-hall stage you sometimes see a trick dancer running with all his might and yet remaining on the same spot. How, in Heaven's name, had this aquatic creature got there? How did it know in which direction to go, and was it its own native pond that it was making for? The parents were nowhere to be seen; there was no water within a couple of hundred yards or more; and there appeared to be no explanation why this callow fledgling should be stranded on a dusty road so far from its natural element. Had a hawk or jackdaw seized it and then released it in flight? We could not divine the cause. The old man dropped his shovel and hurried towards it. This, however, frightened the little outcast, who made desperate attempts to get away and then sank once more to the ground exhausted. So we held a conference. Was it better to protect it from outside interference until it had gained the pond, or should we, at the risk of terrifying it still more, and perhaps doing it an injury, rescue it from its predicament and carry it to the water? Tappitt was in favour of the former course, and so we slowly followed the dabchick at a respectful distance, beholding its courageous but terrible exertions with ever greater wonder and pity. Our old friend, however, could soon endure it no longer, and with a sort of whimper ran ahead once more, took it tenderly in both hands and, bearing it carefully to the pond, deposited it by the water's edge. It was as fat as butter and its little belly swollen with food. Out it swam a couple of yards and then dived, then dived again, plunging and splashing in holiday mood, while we stood upon the bank rejoicing. Never had I seen at such close quarters so consummate a performer amid obstructions of every kind—slimy, trailing weeds, bulrushes, the dipping branches of an overhanging oak, and water-lily leaves as big as plates. The little fellow, however, never hesitated for an instant, but, hedged about as he was on all sides, above and below water, dived and dived, navigating with effortless skill this jungle of entanglement and reappearing after long intervals many feet from where he started. Not soon either shall I forget the look of ecstasy upon the face of old Tappitt as we turned away. He is still with us, unloquacious as of yore, a shade more serious and a trifle weaker, but dogged at his work and devoted as ever to all his pets—the birds of the air and the beasts of the field.

One other old retainer I cannot but recall, now gathered to his Highland sires. He was a Scot and in early manhood had been a gillie of my grandfather's, but had subsequently migrated south to be our gamekeeper in Sussex. From fourteen years of age he had been in our service, and died in it in harness when close on seventy-five. Nobody knew who Dougal's parents were, for he was a foundling, abandoned by the side of a burn that babbled through a small glen on a well-known deer-forest. But as for myself and some others who were intimate with him, we never had a doubt that he was of gentle birth on one side of his parentage or the other. All his instincts, bearing and outlook bespoke an ancestry of knightly blood and honourable tradition. The deepest pleasure vouchsafed to me as a boy was ferreting rats or rabbits the livelong day with Dougal, with spade, nets, dog and gun, or creeping to the pond's edge and putting up a duck or teal, or sitting by a float waiting for the perch to bite. As I lay in bed at school, my last thoughts at night were the number of days or weeks when I should once again be with him in the hedgerows or the woods; and, before leaving after the holidays, I would pluck a piece of moss or break off a fragment of turf near the scene of my final outing with him, and treasure it as a visible particle of that heavenly world where life was almost more than bliss. In those days he regarded me with the affection of an elder brother, yet combined an ease of intercourse and, at the same time, a recognition of our respective positions with a tact and charm I have never seen equalled. On one occasion there had been a violent scene at home, accusation and denial, and a sense of rank injustice at the treatment meted out. My feelings had been ploughed up and I rushed to my bedroom and packed a little case. The station was only five minutes from the house. On reaching London, I jumped into a cab, and after several hours' waiting found myself in an empty third-class carriage bound for the North. I was quit of the Past, deeply wronged, as I believed myself to be, and, with scarcely any money in my pocket, was taking my sore heart where I would see my kith no more. But hardly had I sunk into a corner, when a well-known face appeared at the window. It was Dougal, clad neatly in a blue serge suit and with his kind eyes sorrowfully regarding me. He opened the door and came and sat opposite to me. Never had he been more respectful. Admiration, pity, love shone in his face. Complete comprehension was there of all I had suffered, of the revolt, the despair, the ache, the silent rage.

He begged me to go back with him, but not a word of blame was spoken; my parents were never referred to; the cause of it all ignored. He implored me for his own sake not to leave. There were tears in his eyes. The train had long since started. Over and over again I refused to turn back, told him I had business ahead, that I wanted to be alone and not to be bothered. But still he pleaded. There he sat, bending forward, with his rough hands resting on his knees and his eyes fixed on my face, almost sprucely dressed and on the verge of a breakdown, recalling to my mind all the fun we had had together, all the joys that we still might have, if only I would turn back. It was the appeal of pure unselfish affection and it broke my resistance and healed the wounds. I divined, too, how it was with him. He had been ordered to bring me back, *by force if necessary*. Guessing my probable destination, he had had time to change, and, catching a later train from home, had raced across London. How could he use force against his little Master? It would have bruised his heart beyond repair, shattered all the Past, destroyed that perfect relationship between us, been such a shock as neither of us could have got over. As I sat there obdurate, listening to him, his terrible predicament came home to me. The rôles were reversed. I began to feel immeasurably sorry for him. I knew that I could not give him this pain, that, once force were used, our friendship and dear companionship would be at an end. I could see the struggle going on within him, his desperate efforts to soften my heart, and, when we reached the next station, I got out. From that instant nothing was said of what had happened, plans only were made for the future. We laughed and jested, had a meal at the railway-station and reached home late at night. But we were both conscious of how dire a crisis we had been through and that the power of love alone had saved us. As I stood at his bedside forty years later, this scene came back to me. All the intervening period dropped away. He was no longer stretched helpless and dying, but as I used to know him when a boy. It was not forty years ago, but yesterday, and to-morrow we should again be hunting in the Elysian fields. Perhaps we shall.

Very soon, old retainers, as some of us recollect them, will be a type for curiosity or remembrance only. They are patently out of keeping with the present age. Deer-parks, spacious rooms, ancient manors, pheasant-coverts, home-farms, ornamental lakes and gardens, stables and so forth, coupled with ample means and

leisure in their employers, are the very essence of their picturesque existence. Where shall we look for these a generation hence? The stage is preparing, aye, is already cleared, for quite different actors who even now are chafing in the wings. These, in turn, may one day be regretted, their fashion superseded by a newer style. But the one faith at least to which we may pin our hope is this, that loyalty of service, whether to the one or the many, will ever be revered as a holy thing, if the grace of love attend it and a worthy pride.

GODFREY LOCKER LAMPSON.

### SQUATTER.

LET me come back to live but just in sight  
Of the blue smoke that from your chimney-tops  
Spies its pale skeins above the hill-set copse—  
Where I may watch your windows, each clear night,  
Lift their stern bucklers of barred golden light  
To mark the limit where my sufferance stops;  
Let me but watch you walk among your crops—  
Myself hedge-hidden—in obscure delight.

Let me come back, and pitch my wayward tent  
In the far corner of your smallest field—  
O my heart's landlord!—nor, if you consent,  
Shall you regret the tenure that you yield:  
Grant me the squatter's privilege—I swear  
You shall not even know that I am there.

JOAN RAMSAY.

# IN A SYRIAN HARIM.

BY FREYA STARK.

As soon as I reached Damascus I sent a note to my pretty friend Ne'matelhamid. Translated, her name means the Grace of the Merciful One.

She belongs to one of the old and wealthy families of the city; Albanians I believe generations ago, but now Syrian of the Syrians, with two brothers proscribed at the time I speak of, and a brother-in-law still in exile now. Another brother is a doctor; there was nothing against him, for he happened to be abroad all through the French troubles, and was thus able to keep the family estates together when Syria was what is called pacified.

I had an introduction at that time, and he came to call on me in a dingy house in the Christian quarter where one of the native missionaries lived. The daughters of the house learnt how to sing, and to do sums and so on, in the mission school: they washed themselves on Saturdays, usually with my soap if I had not hidden it; but the advantages of Keating's they had not learnt. I had fallen ill and lay there uneasily among them, while usually eighteen ladies or more sat around me, holding up forks with candied oranges to bite at, and talked over my body in the sweet singing Arabic of Damascus which had become a burden to my ear.

I was too weak to reach the roof where the sunlight travelled its daily journey: I had begun to wonder how long it was going to take to die—when this energetic young man appeared; sent medicines in phials of pale blown glass like those of Phœnician tombs; talked to my landlady in a way she could not misunderstand: and soon had me out again in the April air.

It was good to be alive.

Either alone or with my new friend I wandered into every nook and narrow winding way of the enchanted city. I came to know tanners and weavers in the dark houses by the Barada within the Gate of Peace. The shoemakers working their scarlet leather; the dyers who live among dim vats in vaults sepulchrally curtained with indigo; the bookseller with sunken cheeks and fine striped gown who sold me Arab tales, were all among my friends. I knew the woman in the garden of Saladin's tomb where the peach blossom

and the water and the cypress trees make a small oasis for birds, and could wander as I pleased among the blue tiles of the great king's sepulchre. I would sit in the sun in the courts of small mosques where there are no slippers provided for the Infidel, on whose floors the sunlight alone trembles and burns like prayers. Or I would reach the suburbs where Beduins held strange markets of roots and faggots, and the women from the villages came riding on donkeys with their produce, each village clothed in its particular costume and with a mark of its own clipped ornamentally on the neat white hind-quarters of the ass.

Then as I grew stronger, Najib Bek took me to see his sisters in the house on the slope of the hill, with the golden city and its orchards below; and there I met Ne'matelhamid, and her younger sister Nejma, which is to say a star, and Ahmad the youngest brother just fifteen, and their mother and father who spoke only Arabic, and the retriever Gendarme. We sat on chairs picked out in cream-coloured velvet, and drank tea and then coffee, and talked about female accomplishments, for the girls painted in oil-colours on silk, taught by French sisters. I also had learnt French and fine stitchery in a convent, though it had never made me guilty of anything quite similar, and we were soon happy in the atmosphere of the Pensionnat. A continental education will enable you to understand and be understood the world over in a way which seems scarcely respectable to the uninitiated.

After this we had many happy days together.

Ne'matelhamid and the two boys and I would charter some dilapidated car and go out into the country. They would bring lunch and a rug and two guns. Gendarme, wagging himself nearly into two pieces, would settle down on top of it all. I wanted Roman frontier fortresses, and they wanted quail or duck or whatever was sent by Allah within range. We would make for the lakes where the seven rivers pour themselves into the desert and die, or for the nearer villages of the Ghuta. We had to be careful, for the country was still very unsettled. Kind missionary ladies begged me at intervals not to do any of these things, and were I am sure theoretically right, as people who are wrong so often are. What we were careful about, however, was the French and Circassian police, who allowed no firearms to be carried, and would have interfered with the hunting. When we saw them riding two by two along the desert road we shoved the guns between our knees, covered it all well over, and implored Gendarme to look like a lap dog. I had an idea at that time that the Circassian



was more afraid of the Syrian than the Syrian of the Circassian. They hated each other, but beyond cold looks as we passed, nothing ever happened.

The villages were much more uncertain.

In those of the Ghuta itself, under walnut trees by streams and dusty lanes, all was well, for they mostly belonged to Najib and to his family or to their friends. The headman would come out to meet us, his children would cluster round and climb up for a ride, we would turn the car across a ditch or a cornfield, and spreading a Persian rug under flowering apricots, would sit at leisure till they brought us curds and cheese, olives and nuts, and told the village news. It was a friendly scene of feudal days.

But in the outer villages, where the Raider's Road runs south-east; where the trees have ended and the wheat grows thinly, and the village common is but a piece of the Arabian desert; where the people are still half Beduin with the desert in their blood: here the old feud between Tribe and Town was always to be felt under the surface. My friends thought them savages, and let them know it: they in their turn, rebuffed and inarticulate, would I am sure gladly have plundered us if they could; and I have felt much safer when quite alone among them. But there was a great charm in these open days by the desert lakes: the infinite purity of the sky; the pale water and innumerable flash of wings among the reeds; Ahmad, forgetful of all else, wading out to his waist with his gun held up and shooting at the white-winged water birds whose shrill ethereal cry as they hovered over their dead companions seemed, lost in the spaces of the sunlight, to be the very voice of loneliness.

I thought of all these things as now, for the second time, I came to Damascus after two years.

Like a book long unread, which one opens with trepidation, wondering if the enchantment will still hold, I waited for a sight of the city. And the wonder held. The train, which is better than the road, for it takes you low down the narrow valley almost along the bank of Barada, with the woods around you—the train came out into the open by the village where Abel was slain. The red hill behind Salhiye; the domes and minarets of Soliman's mosque; a glimpse of Barada that 'like an arrowe clere' runs straight between its parapets and bridges through the town; it was all there in the opal-hearted city. My own gipsy heart again felt the magic with a surprise of joy, like a tide, so that I pressed my hands together and could have cried aloud. Not even the

fact that for the first time I was to spoil things by seeing them from an hotel could diminish the rapture.

‘To-morrow we take you with us to the country. We have been waiting only for you. We go to my uncle at Hudeime. The beautiful free life. You will see.’

So said Ne’matelhamid as she pushed back her veil in my bedroom while I seized the coffee from the waiter before more of him than his hands could penetrate among these ladies. Nejma was there too, and an aunt from Aleppo. Both watched me in silence while Ne’matelhamid chattered.

She had not changed; except perhaps to become prettier. Her face, the grey-green eyes, the short lip so petulantly curved, still had the same impetuous upward poise on the pretty neck. She had the slight Parisian elegance, with something a trifle less restrained, more violent and incalculable, as if our civilisation, though carried with the unconscious freedom of the well-born, had not yet soaked into a nature which broke through with the undisciplined charm of a wild little brook in a garden.

‘Now we are taking you to see the exhibition: all the things that our country can do. Then you shall rest to-night; and to-morrow morning we go.’

To the exhibition we went, and saw all the industry of Syria, from its latest venture in machine-knitted jerseys to the damascened daggers and golden-threaded gowns. Sweetmeats, as good as any in the world; gaming tables inlaid with mother-of-pearl; bedroom suites in gaudy styles of Europe; abbas from Aleppo; soap from north Syria mentioned by Ibn Batuta seven centuries ago; almonds and apricots and raisins; yellow plaits of raw silk from Lebanon, now, alas, nearly all exported to France while Europe dumps her imitations on these markets; potteries, atrocious paintings, exquisite brocades.

We lingered, for the ladies were veiled and it is no easy matter to examine things when you have to lift the black chiffon from your eyes with one hand and cover your mouth with it with the other, get near enough to look at the object, and also see that you are turning your back on every man in the room. The girls were rather careless about it, but the aunt was correct and kept us waiting.

When we left, we strolled in the autumn twilight into the wide court of Soliman’s mosque near by. Here was no light but that of the early stars; no noise but the splashing fountain,

and men slouching in their long gowns and loose slippers as they went in for the evening prayer. The tombs of dead benefactors were scattered among the flower-beds. The dim pavement still held the warmth of the day. Modern names of sciences and grammar were written on the doorways of the cloister where the school is, but from the mosque, whence at these hours of prayer women are excluded, the voice of the Imam called upon the unchanging names of God. With the sense of peace upon us, we left and parted for the night.

Ne'matelhamid's mother had been undecided whether to come with us or no, but she appeared in the morning, a little woman with a gentle face and eyes still beautiful. The mouth was too large—with an expression of great sweetness and patience, which she must have needed—for what with the natural impetuosity of her young people, bringing change after change into the old life, and the long war lived in the shadow of famine, and the sentence of death hanging over her sons, and her elder daughter and daughter's children in exile—sorrow and anxiety enough had entered the Harim. Her hair, parted smoothly to a small knot on the neck, was dyed with henna, and showed an inch or so of grey at the roots: but she cannot have been more than fifty if as much, though for her the vanities of life were over.

She now covered herself with her black nun-like garment, and we followed to where a car, of the old familiar dilapidation, waited amid an overflow of packages and baskets. At sight of it the Levantine waiters forgot that I was a tourist, packed us into it as if they were family friends, and, lurching through the markets of Damascus at one with their happy and untidy carelessness, we soon found ourselves on the road to Duma. Here the Nairn convoys pass twice a week on their way to Baghdad; we were in touch with the world. But we turned aside after Duma, along a dusty lane under olive-trees, and there in sight almost of the great road, unpacked ourselves and all our parcels at the door of Abdalla Bek's house in the village of Hudeime, where I suppose no European had ever troubled to halt before.

The house formed the angle of a mud village, but its outer wall, instead of being blind and bullet-proof like the rest, was pierced by several smart windows with mosquito netting and an arched door with a little postern inside it, on which we knocked. Knocking in the east is no mere formality; there is the sense of ambush

about it. The master or his servant stands and waits behind his bolts till he hears your actual voice, and I have spent a whole winter in a native lodging in Baghdad and never once been able to enter without first saying who I was.

Abdalla Bek himself however was waiting, and greeted us as we stepped through the postern, while his wife, fair and fat and rosy, with the complexion of a Glaxo baby and an up-tilted nose, paused in the background so as to be unseen by the chauffeur. Her mother-in-law was here also, all angles in a tight cotton printed gown; she had long ago ceased to try to look attractive. Two little village servant girls with silver anklets and bare feet below their frilled pink trousers waited behind their mistresses.

We stepped with a sigh of relief out of the constraint of the world into the freedom of the Harim. This, I believe, is how the majority of Eastern women feel about it.

We shed our cloaks, hat, veils, and shoes. Zeinab the little maid came with high wooden pattens which one can slip out of at the threshold of a sitting-room. They give your ankles most sudden wrenches until you learn their way. We went through the best room, admired a mother-of-pearl wardrobe in a Welling-tonian square of mother-of-pearl chairs; and found ourselves in a pleasant place—an oblong paved yard, with a cistern and a pump in the middle, and flowers that seemed to grow from the stones, so thickly did they cover their beds. On one side ran the kitchen, bathroom, and storerooms: on the other, the general bedroom, the 'best' room, and between them the 'Dar' or open room which is like a large alcove, open on one side and slightly raised above the level of the court in all Damascus houses. The two other sides of the court were walled in: there was a door in one of them, but it led to an outer yard where the master of the house and his farm hands could sometimes be heard conversing, and we never went that way unless we first sent a warning to have the objectionable sex cleared off the premises. We did so now. We wanted to see the horses and calves and the oven; and Zeinab, pulling a checked cotton thing over a corner of her mouth for form's sake, ran out to tell any wandering man who might be there to eclipse himself.

In this court goats and hens, dogs and the two horses and the cows all lived in various mud-built outhouses on the same one-storied level as our own, but not whitewashed. The oven was here, built of the same mud and straw, with a round hollow body open at the top, like a jar, into which lighted sticks are thrust

till the sides are hot enough to bake the thin discs of unleavened bread which cling to them as they are thrown by a practised hand.

'The Wife of my Uncle herself comes here to bake. It is all she has to do,' said Ne'matelhamid.

The Uncle's Wife smiled, a picture of contented placidity. She might have stood at the oven with the cats and hens around her for some old Dutch master.

'We must go back,' she said. 'Your Uncle will make the coffee.'

Abdalla Bek was sitting on a low stool in the court of the Harim with a small brazier before him, ready for as much attention as any other man in the performance of his one domestic job. Zeinab rushed off for the shallow copper spoon wherein the berries are roasted. His wife produced the berries themselves from her store, wrapped in a wisp of cotton from which she dribbled them out into the spoon while he sifted and turned them over with earnest attention before putting them on to the fire. The long-handled iron for stirring them about, the mortar for grinding them, the four coffee-pots for the actual making of the drink, were all placed around him. Their thin scented smoke presently curled up into the sunshine; we wandered about among the cosmea—Nahif, the fragile one, they call it—the marigolds and red 'cocks heads'; the ladies told the latest scandal from Damascus—in this leisurely way the morning went.

The Harim is a great teacher of good manners. Shut out from the world, one is also shut into a little world from which one never gets away. The man leaves the household to its devices for most of the day, but the other women of the establishment are always together: the idea of a private room, even a bedroom, is uncommon, however large the house may be. If you feel sleepy in the daytime, you drag out a pillow from where they are stacked on the floor with the mattresses ready for the night, spread a rug on the carpet, and lie down, while the gramophone in the corner and the family all around you continue their conversations. If you want to read, write or study, you sit near a window and join as little as you can in the general talk. However often you may be interrupted, however tired you may feel, you will never appear either bored or impatient with the other members of your little world, for this mutual courtesy is the foundation which alone makes such a life possible. We say that the Eastern woman is undisciplined. It is a discipline different from ours. Concentrated

work or thought come hardly to her, for she has never lived in circumstances which made them humanly possible. But the self-control which comes from living day in day out with people who may or may not be congenial, but from whom she *never* gets away, that is hers in an eminent degree. Our petulance, our individual likes and dislikes and the assumption that we may quite frequently show them, our casual brusque ways, are strange to her: the good manners of the East, which are so fundamental a part of its life, are, I think, largely due to the fact that it is a life lived almost entirely in public.

Ne'matelhamid and I shared the best room. From the floor, where our mattresses were spread, covered with hand-embroidered sheets and satin quilts, I would look up in the morning and see the mother-of-pearl wardrobe glittering down on me.

Ne'matelhamid would open her eyes, give her brown curls a shake, and be more or less ready. Washing was done in the leisure of the afternoon, but a few family towels and a piece of soap near the pump were there for our hands and teeth and faces before and after meals.

My dressing always took longer, and I usually joined the family as it wandered in and out round the breakfast table where a great variety of good things stood promiscuously on yellow oilcloth. The amount of things that milk, sweet or sour, turned itself into, surprised me; there was always a new sort of junket or curds or cheese.

The Primus stove was going somewhere in the room, and Ne'matelhamid busy over it boiling eggs. Bread was there, like a stack of plates in one corner; everyone tore a piece off or helped themselves to a whole flat disc if they liked: sometimes it was stewed into an excellent soup with milk and other things in a copper pan in the middle of the table. There were candied egg plants, and apricots; pickles of all sorts; mint and a chopped bitter herb they were all fond of. Huge raisins sun-dried among the vines by the village women, walnuts rolled in a paste of flour and grape juice, water-melons from Damascus and quinces sent by another uncle from Zebdani in the hills. A few forks and spoons were thrown about: someone would rush to the pump to seize a towel for me as a napkin: the maids came straggling in with afterthoughts to crowd on to the already crowded table: and everyone talked at once in the cheerful universal way of breakfasts in the country.



After this Abdalla Bek, who amid all the movement of his womenkind had gone on steadily with the business of eating, and kept all his favourite small saucers as close to him as a wave-washed rock its barnacles and limpets—Abdalla Bek would go off to attend to agriculture. For this he donned a brown abba embroidered with gold ; mounted his white horse with tasselled saddle ; laid his gun across his saddle bow ; and spent a peaceful morning a few hundred yards off on an apricot press in the shadow of the trees while his peasants ploughed the ground with two black oxen.

Ne'matelhamid and I would sometimes join him, for the other ladies rarely wanted to move. Their oblong patch of sky above the courtyard walls where the shadow, slowly descending and dwindling across the smooth flags, would tell the hours, until in the evening it rose again from the western side while yet the fair outer world was clothed in sunshine—this view was enough for them. The fine new windows at the back were fastened and shuttered ; had never, I believe, been opened at all ; since, as they said, people might think of looking inside.

But Ne'matelhamid and I walked out, usually along the water channels which flow through the fat fertile peace of the land and scarcely stir the mint and waterweeds. Except for the hills on our north, all around was ploughed arable, or fields of sprawling vines now turning yellow, or old olive-trees in even rows with squirrels hopping about among them. The peasants were out with their crops, but they turned their faces away as we passed to avoid looking at a Moslem woman, and Ne'matelhamid would scarcely trouble to pull down her veil. This was the ' beautiful free life ' of the country.

We had long talks at this time.

She told me how, six or seven years ago, she had been invited to America to finish her education at college there. All was arranged ; her father had consented ; when her brother, on leave from Palestine, refused to allow her to go. He spoke to her father, and her dream was shattered. She shut herself up and wept : she refused all food : for days and nights she wept and wept, till even the brother was anxious and sorry. Her mother came to the door and coaxed her ; promised to devote her own dowry and to send her to Europe later on. She would open to no one. At last, after a week, she reappeared among them, so thin and altered that they scarcely knew her, and spent a long time petting her back to health.

'Since then,' said she, 'my father lets me do what I like, for he knows now that I can judge for myself what is fitting. I help him with his accounts, and his land: Aziz as you know is exiled, and Najib was away until these last two years. It is he who is severe, though he is good also, and no one in my family would make me marry against my will. My cousin, who has always the first right, as you know, has been refused twice because I will not have him. If he will not give up his right he can prevent my marrying anyone else, but that I do not mind. One there was I might have accepted: my brothers did not think it suitable, and it could not be.'

Men indeed, except for this power of putting their foot down on important occasions, are comparatively insignificant in the daily life of the Harim. Its happiness is made or spoiled by the other women. Very much as it was and still is in old-fashioned continental society where a marriage is an alliance between two families and much of the bride's comfort depends on how her husband's relatives receive her. I was brought up abroad, and used to shock the families of eligible but practically unknown husbands by bringing forward the plea of our mutual indifference. 'We all love you,' said the aunts and sisters and mothers. Why worry about anything else? It seemed no great distance from this to the Harim.

What Ne'matelhamid really cared about, what made her throw her little head back and speak in a voice thrilling with emotion—was politics. Politics of the flamboyant kind that are fashionable in the East, whose poison is so penetrating that it seems to intoxicate even the staid European official if he breathes its distorting air too long. Politics are interesting, to say the least, if your family has been condemned to death and your country has had four different races holding its steering-wheel in less than ten years' time. Ne'matelhamid saw visions and dreamed dreams. Of the steady unrecognised work that lays foundations she could know but little.

One morning when Nejma was with us, we came upon flocks grazing in a bit of waste ground, watched by a small Beduin who was paid a little over three pounds a year by the village to take its sheep and goats out in the morning and bring them home at dusk. Their bleating return in the late light, moving as in a golden haze in the last sun rays among the vines, was always a pretty sight to watch. Now the goats were frisking round their guardian,

who leaned against a tree, a lean little figure all in rags. 'What have you got in your wallet?' the two girls cried across the brook.

'Bread,' said he: and added with the desert courtesy: 'Will you eat?'

Ne'matelhamid looked at me, and her eyes were full of tears. 'These are our Syrian people,' said she. 'He has nothing, and yet he would give us his poor bread. And what do we do for them?'

But her own tenants in the village were strangers to her. Of their miserable poor lives no echo reached our flowery courtyard, except sometimes through little Zeinab aged thirteen whose marriage was preparing in a few months' time. She was our liaison officer. When the fierce keening was heard which tells of an Arab death, we sent her to find out all about it. A Beduin and a peasant villager had disagreed over the harvest of vine leaves which, here as in Italy, the goats and sheep enjoy. The peasant had been killed with a blow on the head. We opened the postern door and watched through a narrow slit while the village Sheich, his purple gown lifted to his knees in rather an undignified way as he walked through the dust, marched off with the culprit before him—hands tied at his back, his long hair hiding his eyes, two villagers with clubs beside him.

Or sometimes Zeinab would take us two through the windowless streets, warm and tawny as the sunlight that baked their walls of mud and straw, and we would loiter and talk to the old crones, 'the spinsters and the knitters in the sun,' who sit under the wall that encircles the space outside the village, and mend incredible rags, and make one think of the three decrepit sisters in the tale of Perseus who had but one eye between them. To these Ne'matelhamid was as much a stranger as I or more so, for she had not our habit of kindly village life. They asked her if she was a Christian and a foreigner, and evidently saw very little difference between us, and felt more at home with me, who knew how to talk about rheumatism and plain sewing.

I described an English village and its intercourse, and Zeinab, listening with wide grey eyes full of the eagerness which life soon crushes out of the Arabian peasant woman, volunteered to take us to the house of a relative in one of the courts near by. These were peasants of the better sort, who pay rent and work for themselves, and are free from what is practically serfdom among the others. Through a wide untidy yard we came into a good room, carpeted with rugs, with copper trays and vessels spread about it.

A handsome young woman decked with coins and silver armlets played with a fat naked baby beside an open fire.

We did not stay. Ne'matelhamid was nervous and anxious, and rushed me home with a preoccupied air; and when we mentioned our escapade at lunch, Abdalla Bek had a lot to say about it in very fast Arabic in the midst of a general feminine silence. I could not follow most of it, but realised by the way in which he returned to the subject again and again like a retreating thunderstorm, that we had committed some breach of decorum; while Ne'matelhamid, the very picture of rebellion, with a red spot on her cheek and a gleam in her eye, looked down at her plate. When the Lord of the Harim had gone, the ladies, like small birds recovering from the visit of a hawk, burst forth into sympathy and conversation, and got as much excitement as they could at second-hand by questioning us to the full.

Nejma was much less impulsive than her sister. Not so pretty, not with so much character in her face, she had the soft gazelle-like eyes whose beauty is most enhanced by the black line of kohl beneath them. Her graceful languorous movements and slow silences were much less Western than Ne'matelhamid's quick and masterful way. Yet Nejma with her quietness always got what she wanted.

'Oh Wife of my Uncle,' she said next day at breakfast, 'shall we not go out to-day into the country?'

'We will have a picnic,' said Ne'matelhamid.

'We will go for water to the hills,' said Abdalla Bek. 'There is a spring so light and good that when I am in Damascus in the winter I send for its water to drink. We will take Abu'lkheir and the donkey and two tins and fetch a supply for the house.'

'The dinner can wait, Wife of my Uncle,' urged Ne'matelhamid. 'It will do you good to walk. You are too fat.'

Abdalla Bek looked a trifle hurt at this description of his wife's charming *embonpoint*, but it took more than that to ruffle her good humour.

'Shall we *all* walk?' she asked.

Abdalla Bek looked at me and asked how I would like to go.

'I should like to walk with the ladies,' said I, and all was well.

We packed fruit in a basket. Orders were sent to Abu'lkheir, who put two empty paraffin tins into coloured saddlebags with tassels, and loaded them and the food and a rug and himself on to the donkey. Abdalla Bek's horse waited at the gate; we left

the two elder ladies, and trooped out through the postern ; watched the gentleman mount with his gun in one hand ; and with the cavalry in front and the commissariat behind us, formed as it were the main body of infantry, which plodded in the dust with long black garments most unsuitable for a country expedition.

An Indian Rajah who in his own land enjoyed the hereditary reputation of divinity once told a friend of mine, in his careful colloquial English, that 'to be a god is not all beer and skittles.' So with the master of the Harim. He has it less his own way than one might suppose. For one thing he is always in a minority and his dinner is in the hands of the more numerous party : he has nothing but a draughty guest-room of his own to retreat to when female society is too much for him. He may have other Harims elsewhere : there was a lady in the village whom we did not talk much about, who was adopted simply because the Wife of my Uncle, to her great sorrow, had no children. But in whatever Harim he may be, it is as well for him to bring into it a pleasant and cheerful atmosphere.

Abdalla Bek certainly did so. He was a good-natured kind sociable man, with a figure now mellowing into curves and a pleasant plain face which even the bristling moustache and the tassels of his white kefie dangling about his eyes failed to make very ferocious. The appearance of authority was maintained in public, but he did not mind who told him what he should think and do at home, so long as it was not his wife, who concentrated on the cooking like a wise woman and let him think that his word was law.

One thing he was very particular about, and I believe suspected a certain amount of laxity in his family regarding it. This was the veil. At intervals he would glance back at the three ladies (for I walked brazenly uncovered) to see that all was in order.

It was very hot, however, and ten o'clock before we started : when we were well away from the village, the veils were all thrown back. 'My dear,' said the Uncle's Wife, or words to that effect : 'There isn't a soul about. Don't be so fussy.' 'There is Abu'lkheir just behind.' But this was a feeble argument, for Abu'lkheir, far too well trained ever to glance in the direction of his master's ladies even when he had to answer their questions, was now looking into vacancy with a fixed gaze and crooning his village songs in time to his little donkey's ambling steps. The Master of the Expedition gave in gracefully, and rode on ahead in solitary splendour while we followed, contented but dusty, eating melon seeds

as we went, which—as the Arab ladies say—are excellent for passing the time, being very difficult to get at inside their hard flat shells.

The veil as a matter of fact has a lot to be said for it. A missionary who should have known better once asked me how I could bear to associate with people who consider a woman's face so disgraceful that it has to be covered up. But this is the grossest misrepresentation, and would surprise both the men and the women accused of it. The feeling which makes an Arab cover up his women, is exactly the same as the feeling which made our grandfathers beg our grandmothers not to be seen driving in a public omnibus. Our grandfathers called it chivalry. Our grandmothers did so sometimes but not always. The Syrians of the town have just reached this stage of the argument. The old worldwide sentiment which sets women apart, which is excellently expressed by the Arabic word *Harim*, something sacred and forbidden, is slowly being combated by the idea of the individual value of a human being as such. This evolution is of course much less advanced in the East than in the West, but the principles beneath it are the same. The Arab parents who dislike to see their daughter's face uncovered in the street, would give reasons of the same sort as those given a few years ago by the more sentimental opponents of the women's franchise in England, or by the French mother who sent the maid to walk a few steps behind *Mademoiselle* as she went out shopping. It may be prejudice, or chivalry, or more often in a mixed world both together, but it is certainly not one thing in Europe and another in Syria.

Apart from this the veil has great advantages. It preserves the complexion against the dust and sun and has the effect of dark glasses on the dazzling roads. It makes you completely inconspicuous. And it lets you stare as much as you like without being seen in return.

Meanwhile we were gradually leaving the plain; the red hills, seemingly without a shrub upon them, were rising before us in crumpled ridges of what looked like sandstone. The water we were following to its source meandered beside our path in a slow stream. When we came to a place where two walnut trees arched over it, Abdalla Bek waited: the rug was spread: grapes and bananas and dates were produced and we sat and refreshed ourselves by the wayside, and fed crabs and minnows whom the rural peace of their lives seemed to make too torpid to take an interest even in such an event as our arrival. The Uncle's Wife fanned herself



with an infinitesimal handkerchief and looked sadly at her high heels. 'I walk to get thin, but not for pleasure,' she confided to me: and soon set forth again as placid and contented as before.

To know the pure beauty of water you must come to one of these Syrian desert springs. Alpine waters gush out from meadows of gentians and lilies: the Highland burns fall over granite boulders under birches and rowans with the hillside of bracken behind them: almost everywhere in the world the flowing water has a landscape to enhance it as a jewel its setting. But in the desert—and the hills of Damascus are but desert up-tilted—the water is lovely in itself alone for there is nothing else beside it. It wells out cold and clear and still from the hot heart of the ground, and flows away silently over its stony bed where every limpid pebble shows. A few flags and willow shrubs line the deep sunken channel; above these the hard desert earth, strewn with stones, comes up to the very lip on either hand. It is as if the pure essence of Life made visible were flowing there; so silent in the strength that carries it up from its hidden centre that no whisper, only some small ripple of brightness as it moves in the sunlight, tells you that it travels. But the oasis is green to your sight in the distance. And in the long afternoon as it slopes towards evening, you will see along the bare shoulders of the hills from their hollows of thin pasture, the flocks of sheep come down behind their shepherds to the drinking place.

The people of the East feel this symbolic beauty of water more than we do. They will sit happily to picnic by a dusty roadside, without even a tree to shade, with nothing except the small thread of some wayside stream which we would call a ditch to mitigate the dreariness of the surrounding landscape: and if you ask, they will tell you that they sit here because 'the voice of the water is sweet.' Unconsciously they feel the intrinsic beauty as we may often feel it in some giant machine, because it is a visible embodiment of the invisible powers.

We stayed for some time looking down in silence into that cool miracle before Abu'lkehir set himself to haul it up in the paraffin tins while the rest of us descended among the willows to drink at the very source. The Uncle's Wife did not attempt it: we should never have got her up again: but as we scrambled back, and while Abdalla was busy superintending the operations down-stream, she suggested that now was the moment for a snapshot.

We had to be quick; he might turn round at any moment and would disapprove very strongly; I had to promise to wait till I

left Syria to get the things developed, so that no countryman of hers should see the picture; and the business of conveying it to her afterwards undiscovered required a great deal of organisation. It was all settled however before he came back to mount his horse and lead us home again along the stony bank towards the green country. Under our walnut trees beside the minnows we rested, and finally reached our village in the hottest of the afternoon, the rest of which the Uncle's Wife, exhausted but proud of her exertion, spent in getting ready our belated lunch.

I was always glad when the midday meal was late, for the afternoon was very long. We used to go into the best room, which was cool, and sit on the floor among the mother-of-pearl chairs draped in white covers, and go on talking for the rest of the day. I would lie down and take a less and less intelligent part in the conversation till I slept altogether. 'You have been asleep,' they would all say in surprise when I opened my eyes, as if this were the most extraordinary way of spending the idle hours of a hot day. And even so, it would yet be a long time before supper.

Our real dressing was done about this time. The furnace was lit and we wandered across the court to the bathroom, where a large copper cauldron stood on the floor. The hot water ran into it; one sat beside it on a small stool, lathered oneself all over, and poured the water over head or shoulders by means of a tinned bowl with verses of the Koran beaten on its rim. The floor sloped a little, so that the water ran away. Then one dried oneself with a big towel embroidered with silver flowers, and came back to dress with the rest of the family.

The Uncle's Wife now opened the wonderful wardrobe and pulled out Parisian evening gowns shimmering with tinsel, with roses on their shoulders: there was a new one for every night and our country clothes were put to shame. Then she hunted about and fetched comb, powder and rouge, which her lovely complexion did not need, a little jar of kohl, and sat on the floor with a mirror propped in front of her to draw the long black line under her eyes.

By this time the sun had moved across our court and the Dar was in shadow. We went out there to sit with the two elder ladies on thin mattresses of Kurdish rugs. My host's mother, a cigarette in a long holder in her mouth, would now smile upon me kindly, for we had made friends over the flowers which we both loved; and indeed all the household treated me charmingly as one of themselves. They would make room for me in the honour-

able place against the wall, while one of the girls went to fetch the favourite game, which they call 'burjiz.' It is played on an embroidered cloth worked into a pattern of squares, with four pawns whose movements are regulated by six cowrie shells which they use as dice, flinging them on to the carpet with a pretty quick movement of the wrist and all its bangles. The player and all the onlookers then shout 'benj' or 'dast' or 'shakk,' etc., according to the number of shells that fall on their backs, and the pawns are moved like the figures in a jockey race on shipboard, except that there are a good many more combinations and some skill is required. The game from its vocabulary must, I imagine, come from Persia.

We used to play it for hours together. The girls' mother was fond of it. Now and then she would pause with the dice in her hand to tell me about her absent ~~some~~ wandering from court to court among the Arabs in exile while the permission to return was still delayed: it has been happily granted this year.

Or she would tell about the grandchildren in Palestine, who had come to Damascus for a visit in the spring, bringing great joy, though their father could not cross the frontier. I had met him and invited him to lunch on my former journey, and been shadowed by a detective for one whole afternoon in consequence—my first but not I hope my last experience of how easy it is to make our harassed Intelligence waste its precious brains and time over the innocent. The suspect, however, was a delightful man who told me that his home had been broken up fifteen times by various governments. No doubt he is anathema to many an overworked official. I only think of him as a very mild and devoted father among four curly-headed children, and here in Hudeime village, when the grandmother spoke with trembling lips of their return so long delayed, it was difficult to think of reasons of state.

The French, indeed, were hated in a wholehearted way which I never found equalled against the British in Iraq when I went there soon afterwards.

'Not even the frogs in this country would have them, if there were any choice,' said Abdalla as we sat out in the evening and listened to the croaking from every pond and slow meandering stream in the neighbourhood. He was playing chess with me, with a weird set of chessmen very difficult to recognise at first, and as I was beating him he preferred to discuss politics.

Ne'matellahmid on the gramophone had started one of those Beirut songs which say insidious things about the government

without appearing to do so, and having been forbidden by the authorities are of course sung and studied in every household in Syria. She then put on the Egyptian lament for Zaghul, which also is known from the Nile to the Tigris. The woman's voice who sings it is extraordinarily moving and passionate: I had become accustomed to the strange Arabian harmony, and could gauge in some measure what it meant to them, and thought as I watched the silent group how great is the revolutionary power of a song. Mere reason will have no strength against that. The Egyptian voice broke and sobbed in its lament. Ne'matelhamid, throwing herself forward, moaned with the pain of it.

But now the master of the house pulled out his watch, and saw that the first hour of the night, for Arabic time is from sunrise to sunset, had begun.

The two elder ladies, who had slipped away, came back like Greek figures wrapped in white and set out their prayer rugs behind him. The young people in one corner went on throwing their cawrie shells, or looking at the *Arabian Nights*, the only book in the Harim.

Then Abdalla, standing in the twilight, intoned the beautiful words of the opening prayer in the pure Arabic which of itself is a delight.

'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe. The Merciful, the Compassionate. King of the Day of Judgement. Thou Whom we serve, of Whom we seek assistance. Lead us in the level path, the path of those to whom Thou hast shewn favour; devoid of anger against them, who wander not astray.'

The two women behind him, their white drapery fading into the shadows that gathered round us, their motionless faces and upturned palms alone showing from among the dim folds like some old votive carving, followed the prayers with scarcely moving lips and bent to place their foreheads on the ground.

In the still evening the voice of our host, in half-singing cadence, sounded inexpressibly touching and sincere, as if indeed he stood in communion with his God, the world forgotten.

'Do you never join in the prayer?' I asked Ne'matelhamid that night as we settled on—our mattresses on the floor.

'Never,' said she.

Yet she is an ardent Mohammedan. But politics are taking the place of prayers in modern Syria.

## *DINNER FOR ANNIE.*

BY F. H. DORSET.

THE keeper's cottage stood on the crest of the rise where the Green Drive rose highest to dip most steeply before completing its last undulating mile through Wisbury Wood. It sat beside the road, pushing upward amid the tender green of larches its one solid twisted chimney, built a century ago: and behind and before it stretched the Wood, at once vigorous and tentative with the life of spring. Primroses were in full flare, bluebells misting dimly with colour, anemones and unobtrusive wood-sorrel spread upon the turf a mesh of white and silver. The day itself was warm and very still save for the joyous piping of many birds.

By the cottage door a young woman in an old-fashioned pale-blue pinafore with frills upon the shoulders sat on a stool disintegrating dandelion flowers into a large earthenware bowl. The sunlight and shadow lay upon her in calm delight, moving with the rhythmic motion of her hands, and Edward Prance, pushing his bicycle up the rutted slope of Green Drive, wished that he was the artist which he had always vaguely desired to be, instead of a banker's clerk on holiday. He noted with pleasure that nothing but a low paling separated the cottage from the Drive, and that the little gate before the doorstep stood wide open. He could, therefore, address the woman without calling her from her picturesque occupation.

She looked up at his approach with veiled interest, and he observed that she was a little older than he had at first imagined; twenty-five perhaps, wearing already faint signs of much domestic toil and a heavy gold wedding-ring, but beautiful with astonishing beauty. Within the blue pinafore lurked a figure slender and supple; her complexion was delicately sunburnt to the quality of a 'nut-brown maid,' and between lips now parted in silent inquiry white teeth showed shyly. Golden-brown plaited hair was swirled demurely into a pair of medieval plaques, one covering each ear, and her soft eyes were brown of a deeper quality. Edward felt suddenly awed at this unexpected encounter with a woman so completely in harmony with the charm of her surroundings.

It was like discovering the perfect beauty of an unobtrusive brown bird in the right place, for many people, he thought with some self-gratulation, would have missed the true quality of her loveliness. She was a Wood-nymph, he decided, married and a little sobered, but retaining the odd innocency of the wild creature, and he addressed her with becoming reverence.

'I beg your pardon,' he said, 'but would you tell me if this is really a short cut to the Marlbury road and whether I am trespassing?'

The questions were needless, for he knew their answer already, but one does not encounter a Wood-nymph and find a good opening for conversation every day.

The young woman smiled and rose, shaking a yellow shower of petals into the brown bowl as she did so. She made answer in an agreeably soft voice with blurred country accents. Evidently a probably board-school education had not deprived her of her birthright to much of the speech of her forefathers.

'You'm right for the Marlbury road,' she said, 'but it ain't much of a short cut. So long as you don't go off into the coverts you ain't trespassin'. Folks is allowed to picnic a bit further on by the Queen's Oak—that's down the beechy avenue to the left—but they mustn't light no fires. If they ain't brought vacuum flasks I boils 'em kettles. Was you goin' to picnic, sir?'

Edward Prance shook his head.

'No. I've got to get into Marlbury by one o'clock and lunch with a friend at the "Black Lion"; but I'd be grateful for a cup of tea now, if you'll make me one. It's warm work, pushing a bike over this road, and riding it is nearly impossible.'

'Pity yours ain't a motor-bike,' said the woman. 'They're 'eavy enough to manage most of the ruts. It's the timber-waggon cuts up the place so cruel. Come inside, sir, and set down. My husband 'll be back about twelve for's dinner, and I keeps a kettle goin' allus for he. A terrible tea-drinker he is, for a man.'

Edward Prance leant his despised push-bike—a new one upon which only the first instalment of an expensive hire-purchase had been paid—against the paling, and followed the Wood-nymph into a wide low-ceiled living-room which bore evidence of having been the habitation of several generations of gamekeepers. An ancient muzzle-loader and powder-horn hung above a high mantelshef, where a round clock ticked metallicly. From the top of an ancient bureau a stuffed wild-cat snarled its last defiance, and an



equally stuffed and tightly curled badger formed an uncompromising footstool, evidently too sacred for use. Upon a round table covered with a white cloth a meal was already set for two, and the wide fireplace, combining a small modern kitchener with its original ingle-nooks, yielded an odour of stew. A brown teapot warmed its sides on the hearth and the kettle hissed on the fire. Extreme cleanliness and order marked the place, testifying to the Wood-nymph as a capable housewife.

The townsman's tendency to ask questions took possession of Edward. He sat down gratefully and began the catechism which, doubtless, his hostess heard frequently from many a summer visitor to the famous Queen's Oak.

'How do you like living right up here in the woods?' he asked. 'Isn't it a bit lonely?'

'It's not so bad except in the winter,' she replied, measuring out tea into the pot. 'Not 'alf so lonely as it did used to be when I was a child. My dad was keeper here then, and now my husband is. You can get a 'bus now twice a week on the Marlbury road as'll take you into Marlbury for your shoppin', and another on Tuesdays as goes to Wisbury for market-day. They've been running ever since the War, but afore that there was only the carrier. It's a bit quiet, but I'm used to it, only I miss my girl Annie now she 'as to go to school every day.'

'Is she your only child?'

The Wood-nymph nodded. 'We lost the boy,' she said succinctly. 'Annie's seven, but you'd take 'er for ten, pretty near. Wunnerful clever, she be. She's been attendin' school, of course, since her were five, but I still misses 'er terrible all day till teatime. She 'as to take 'er dinner along. It's too far to come 'ome.'

The Wood-nymph, decided Edward Prance, gratefully accepting a cup of tea, was probably a monomaniac on the subject of her child. Still she had a pleasant voice, and it did not matter much what she talked about as long as she continued to talk and move with such tranquil unconscious grace. It was sufficiently enjoyable to rest in a Windsor chair and watch her, making mental notes for a memory-sketch in water-colours in the near future.

'I think I passed the school-house down in the village, before I turned up here from the lower road,' he said. 'It's a long walk for a child of seven.'

'I did used to do it, winter and summer,' said the Wood-nymph, 'when I were a child, savin' when there was snowdrifts and us

couldn't get through. But now there's a chara goes round collectin' the kids as lives a long way off in this parish, and it picks 'er up regular at the top of the lane after you gets out of the wood. . . . 'Ere, Reginald ! You leave that there crock alone ! . . . 'Scuse me, sir, but I'll just move them dandelions into the back kitchen. They're for wine.'

She retrieved the brown bowl from the doorstep, where a mongrel terrier was paying it undue attention, and carried it across the living-room to some region beyond. For a few minutes the room was empty and silent save for the pattering of the dog's feet on the brick floor as he cautiously approached the stranger in his master's chair. Through the open outer door the odour of the woods surged in like an invisible sea of freshness, and the doorway framed a vision of utter peace, marred only by the view of a beech-trunk over the way to which a cross-piece of board had been nailed bearing a row of corpses, the bodies of various 'vermin.' Edward counted three weasels, four jays, a crow, and no less than six of the alien grey squirrel who is rapidly exterminating the indigenous Red Fellow of the English forests. Also another alien, in the form of a small but wanton Little Owl. He felt sorry for them. Most of these creatures, he thought, were being sacrificed so that the infant pheasants he had just passed, for the present safe in their wired enclosure, might ultimately be shot by man, the final devastator.

The Wood-nymph seemed to be lingering in the back regions. Edward put down his empty cup and felt in his pocket for small change. He supposed that picnickers usually paid her for such items as tea or kettles of hot water ; at any rate he might delicately offer a tip for the wonderful Annie. He glanced anxiously at the clock. It was still a long way to Marlbury and he had promised to meet an acquaintance there for lunch at the famous 'Black Lion' where he was staying for his holiday. Moreover, he wanted to get at his sketch-block before eye-memory of his hostess became dim. From the back kitchen there sounded a hasty agitated moving of crockery, followed by momentary intense silence which seemed to telegraph alarm into the outer room. Involuntarily Edward stiffened and listened. The dog turned his head towards the inner door and pricked his ears. A second later and the young woman pushed the door wide and walked, white-faced and large-eyed, back into the living-room.

'She's took the biscuits for the rats !' she said shrilly, all

music vanished from her voice. 'She's took 'em along of 'er dinner!'

'She's taken the *what?*' said the startled Edward Prance, dropping a shilling on the floor.

'The rat poison!' shrilled the Wood-nymph. 'They was four old biscuits as I'd spread with the pink paste to put down to-night back of the 'en-'ouse, after the dog was shut in. I put 'em up on the shelf. I never thought she'd see 'em. Her must've thought it was fish-paste. She's partial to fish-paste. I put 'er cold pie and a bit o' cake all ready in 'er satchel in the back kitchen and she must a' seen them biscuits and sneaked 'em too. If she ain't poisoned I won't 'arf smack 'er bottom, I won't! Whatever shall us do? They comes outer school at twelve for dinner, and her'll eat it unless someone stops 'er in time! Oh my God, whatever be us to do?'

A cold shiver ran violently down Edward's spine. He looked again at the clock. Twenty minutes. Could he possibly ride the ruts on his push-bike and gain the school-house in twenty minutes? He had never ridden a motor-bike, for some obscure reason, but perhaps the Keeper possessed one, in which case he would risk it. But Annie's mother shook her head to the question. 'E 'as one,' she said, 'but it's bein' repaired at Wisbury.'

'I believe your clock's fast,' lied Edward comfortingly. 'I'll do it if I ride hard. Don't worry. I'll do it!' He stepped out on to the Green Drive, clutching his bicycle, and mounted. Then, recollecting that the Wood-nymph's name remained unknown to him, he called back. 'What's your name?'

'Camel!' called the young woman. 'You ask for Annie Camel!'

'Lord, what a name!' muttered Edward Prance, driving his machine doggedly between the deep soft furrows. 'Camel!' And the woman had a face like a sunburnt Madonna.

It occurred to him presently that he had not seen a photograph of the child to whose rescue he was riding. Doubtless he would have been shown one inevitably had their conversation pursued a normal course. Still perhaps he would reach the school before the children were released, and in that case the teacher in charge would deal with the situation. And if he met a spate of little girls pouring out to play surely the daughter of Mrs. Camel would be instantly identifiable. Damn the Green Drive and the recent timber-waggons! It was almost impossible to ride. A sudden

pot-hole almost unseated him. What kind of rat poison had Annie's mother spread on those biscuits? Phosphorus? Did phosphorus poisoning hurt much? Oh God, it was unthinkable that he should be too late!

The new bicycle faced the abominable track gallantly, but Edward was very heated when he reached the gate which opened upon a narrow stony lane skirting the woods and leading to the scarcely better road by which the hamlet of church, school, vicarage, a farm and a few cottages had to be attained. He wished that he had put on thinner clothing, and hastily wiped the sweat from his hatless forehead before he opened the gate. A short way up the stony lane his back tyre subsided with a sigh. Cursing, he examined it, remounted grimly, and proceeded to ride tediously upon the puncture. This would ruin the tyre, but no matter. At all costs Annie's dinner must be wrested away from Annie before she could eat it. Perhaps he might encounter a car on the larger road, explain matters and obtain a speedy lift.

He encountered nothing but a manure cart, travelling slowly in the opposite direction behind an almost superannuated white mare, driven by an extremely old man who, he decided at a glance, must be mentally deficient. The road rose gradually, a white track sprinkled with fragments of flint and bordered by turf, strips of woodland, and clumps of hawthorn. Over the crest of the rise the church's spire rose delicately into the clear air and Edward took heart of grace: but some school-going children had strown a branch of hawthorn in his path, and he had ridden over it before he noticed its presence. The front tyre popped ominously and he found himself bumping upon two rims. His heart seemed to be throbbing at the base of his throat as he pedalled fiercely up the last incline and began to free-wheel down to the school building in the hollow. Simultaneously a bell clanged noisily, and as it ceased a flood of children burst forth into the school-yard, broke into skirmishing groups and pairs, and began to scatter in opposite directions towards the fields behind the school and the Common across the road. Edward Prance groaned aloud and charged down upon them, ringing his bell furiously.

A middle-aged woman in horn-rimmed spectacles came across the school-yard and addressed him severely as he propped his injured bicycle against the railings. 'Really,' she said, 'you might have run down one of the children!'

'Sorry!' Edward's eyes ranged anxiously among the numerous

youngsters who had stopped to stare at him. 'It's an urgent message. Are you the teacher?'

'Yes. I'm Miss James.'

'Then will you please stop a child named Annie Camel from eating her dinner? It's got poisoned by accident—rat poison. Her mother's sent me.'

The school-teacher's already startled eyes opened a fraction wider. '*Poison*, did you say?'

'I did. Where's the child?'

'She belongs to the Junior section. They came out ten minutes ago!'

'Then she's had ten minutes. . . .'

Miss James revolved sharply and blew a whistle. The noisy skirmishing in the enclosure subsided, and an efficient-looking pupil teacher emerged from the school-house. Bunches of children stood round-eyed waiting for explanation of this interruption.

'Janey,' said Miss James, 'set all your section to find Annie Camel at once, and prevent her touching her dinner till it's been brought to me. There's poison in it, by accident. . . . Janey Brown's a Girl Guide,' she explained, turning again to Edward. She addressed the elder children near her. 'All of you spread about and find Annie Camel,' she adjured. 'Bring her here at once, and don't let her *touch* her dinner. It's poisoned. You understand?'

The children scattered instantly upon this exciting quest. Already the competent Janey was issuing directions to a bunch of probable Brownies, and a moment later came herself towards Edward and the schoolmistress. 'Hilda Perkins says Annie's gone back to dinner at the farm with the Joneses,' she said, 'and that she gave her parcel of dinner to Stanley Nuttall. I've sent them to look for Stanley, but we'd better go to the farm-house and make sure.'

With one accord they swung towards the gabled farm-house whose cart-yard almost adjoined the school enclosure. Miss James led the way across the yard's succulent surface and knocked briskly at a door beneath a green porch. A stout woman opened it, and received their news asthmatically.

'Annie!' she called into the dusky interior of the house. 'Come 'ere! You're wanted!'

A child emerged into the sunlight and Edward at once experienced a sharp revulsion of feeling. She was all that he most

disliked in a little girl; a beefy child with fat legs in short socks, arrant yellow locks excessively curled, pert blue eyes and an expression only to be characterised as smug. A very large little girl for her age. A quite incredible daughter for a brown Wood-nymph.

'Annie,' said Miss James, 'what did you do with the dinner your mother packed up for you?'

The child smirked virtuously. She tilted her head a little to one side and smiled ingratiatingly at Edward Prance.

'I give it to Stanley Nuttall,' she said piping, 'so's 'e wouldn't 'ave to go all the way 'ome to his'n. And I didn't take nothin' for it, neither.'

'Annie,' struck in Edward severely, 'did you pinch some biscuits spread with paste off the shelf in your mother's back kitchen this morning, and put them in with your dinner?'

The pink face among the brazen ringlets blushed guiltily, the blue eyes became painfully candid.

'No, sir, I never,' said the wide mouth.

Edward eyed her with distaste. Taken merely as a child and not as the beloved daughter of Mrs. Camel he felt that she could better be spared from the world than a probably commonplace but worthy small boy. He said brutally: 'Well, they're gone, and they were spread with rat poison.'

The blue eyes became round as marbles. 'O-o! Then Stanley'll be poisoned!' Terror and excitement blended in the child's tone.

'She's taken 'em all right!' said Edward, addressing the school-mistress. 'Let's hope we collar this other kid in time!'

'Which way did Stanley go?' asked Miss James, practically.

'Cross the Common,' said Annie. 'I 'spect he's down by the stream. I'll come too. . . .'

'You will not!' replied Miss James briefly, and once more wheeled about. 'You'd better keep with me, Mr. . . . er . . . Prance, did you say? We can hunt better together and you can explain best if we find him. He's a tow-headed little boy with a squint. You can't mistake him. He and Billy Iles are our two keenest naturalists.'

They hurried across the Common, a stretch of tussocky grass and bushes plentifully besprinkled with mole-hills and ant-mounds. Brambles caught viciously at the plus-fours which Edward the townsman had rashly worn for cycling. Miss James's short skirt and lightly stockinged legs seemed to avoid them miraculously.



Suddenly the land dropped to a gully along which a tiny brook meandered. A small group of children beside the stream broke apart and pushed forward a plump, white-haired boy for inspection.

'Oh, Stanley!' Miss James's voice registered unutterable relief. 'Then you *haven't* eaten Annie Camel's dinner!'

'No, teacher. Billy Iles swapped it for his'n. 'E likes them kind of biscuits and the pie, and I likes bacon. So 'e's got it.'

Ghastly silence dropped upon the dell. Edward broke it with an oath which he very seldom used. Miss James made the unusual motion of actually wringing her hands.

'Where's Billy?' she asked.

For a second nobody responded. Stanley shifted his feet uneasily and glanced at his companions; they in turn looked at him and then stared at the stranger in their midst. Miss James's voice took on a sharp edge.

'Tell me at once,' she commanded. 'Where's Billy Iles?'

A sudden chorus replied.

'E's in th' Park,' it said. A separate voice, tagging after the rest, added the information 'fishin'.'

Miss James turned to Edward France.

'That means,' she explained, 'that Billy's trespassing along the river where it runs through the Park below the Mansion. Let us hope that a keeper has caught him before he has had time to eat those biscuits. The river there is strictly preserved, and Lord Wisbury keeps that fishing for himself. He lets nearly all the rest. Stanley, you must come along with us and help to find him. The rest of you keep outside. Show us which path he took.'

The white-haired Stanley handed a jam-jar containing water and minnows over to the care of a sister as lint-haired as himself, and proceeded to lead the way upstream beside the brook until it turned aside to run by the side of the Park palings. Here was a padlocked gate fortified by barbed-wire but not unscalable. Said Stanley, when they had climbed it successfully though with detriment to Edward's plus-fours, 'Us'd better holler now for Billy,' and proceeded to do so. Miss James's voice, trained to carry penetratingly through a large classroom, seconded his efforts, and Edward decided that any additional noise from himself was unnecessary, and that in any case he was too much out of breath. They passed through a belt of trees and underbrush and emerged by the river, a not inconsiderable trout-stream. In the pauses between shouts, while they listened for possible response from

Billy, the distant sound of a weir, the nearer murmur of water, and an incessant cawing of rooks away in the trees by the Mansion alone filled the air. A herd of distant deer regarded the noisy intruders with dignity and moved yet farther away.

'I expect,' said Stanley, 'as 'e went along 'ere,' and he turned up the river-bank to the left.

'I wish he'd answer,' said Miss James nervously. 'Was he alone, Stanley?'

'Im and young Jimmy Bush was together.'

'Then if either of them is ill the other's *sure* to answer,' said Miss James hopefully. 'Shout again, Stanley!'

Cupping his hands to his mouth Stanley Nuttall sent a yell towards the tree-hidden curve of the river just ahead, which was so penetrating that the rooks half a mile distant clamoured hysterical response. Edward glanced in the direction of the large white house which was visible across the Park. 'Someone's coming,' he announced.

Miss James shaded her eyes, and then muttered an exclamation.

'That's Lord Wisbury himself,' she informed him. 'Now we'll have to explain ourselves and waste no end of time, and those boys may be writhing in agony somewhere!' Her face twisted itself into lines of annoyance and distress.

An elderly man in shabby tweeds was hurrying towards them. He was thin, of the nervous, irritable type, and plainly in no good temper. He approached them over the grass with long strides, bare-headed, with longish hair disturbed from sleekness by his haste, and Edward was irresistibly reminded of the illustration of the Scissors-Man in his childhood's edition of *Strewelpeter*.

'Now then, now then!' called his lordship, 'what's all this about? . . . Are you aware that you're trespassing? This part of the Park is strictly private. Ah; Miss James, I see! What the devil is all this noise about?'

'I'm sorry, your lordship,' explained the schoolmistress nervously, 'but two of my boys are trespassing in here already, I'm afraid, and we must find them quickly. They came in, so we've been told, to . . . eat their lunch, and one of them has got hold of some poisoned biscuits by mistake. Meant for rats. This gentleman came to the school-house to tell us about it. We must find Billy Iles and Jimmy Bush before either of them eats the food, if it isn't too late already.'

'Iles . . . Iles!!!' His lordship's worried eyes rested absently

upon Edward Prance. 'If he's a son of that chap Iles over at High Copse he's son to the biggest poacher on the place. Eat his lunch indeed! Tickling my trout!'

'Still,' suggested Edward mildly, 'you don't want him poisoned in the Park, do you, m'lord?'

'No, no! Hardly that, hardly that! Well, so you people think you'll find where those scamps have got to by shouting for 'em!' The worried eyes became severe. 'Know what you've probably done? Scared 'em deeper under cover! They've no business to be here at all. First bit of shouting they hear they'll lie low. You'd better follow me to look for 'em, and keep quiet about it. Well, my lad, what do you want to say?' for Stanley, nervously squinting, and bobbing an agitated head, obviously desired to impart information.

'Please, sir—your lordship—Billy's a Woodpigeon! I did ought to 'a' remembered! I ain't a Scout yet; my Dad don't 'old with Scouts; but they're the Woodpigeons 'ere, and I knows the call. If I calls'n wi' that 'e won't be scared. Likely 'e'll answer.'

'Very well; try it presently, but keep quiet a bit first. Let's see if we can pick up a trail.' Lord Wisbury fixed his glasses firmly on his thin nose and peered at the grass beside the river-path. He began to walk rapidly, peering and muttering as he went, and the rest of the party followed in his wake. There seemed to be no alternative; in his own domain his lordship palpably intended to be obeyed.

'You're *sure* Billy came in here?' asked Miss James *sotto voce* of the intelligent Stanley.

'Certain sure, miss,' replied the boy promptly. 'E wanted I to come along too, but I were busy with them tiddlers, so I didn't.'

For a few minutes the trackers proceeded in silence. Edward Prance had time to realise that his original sick anxiety had now become an immense irritation. He was hot, tired, hungry; uncomfortably convinced that presently he would be called upon to lend a hand in rendering first aid to an agonised young boy; and all because an unpleasant little girl with a precocious capacity for thieving and hypocrisy was the beloved child of a Wood-nymph named Camel. And if the Wood-nymph had not been so picturesque he would probably never have asked her for a cup of tea, and by now he would almost have been in Marlbury, enjoying lunch at the 'Black Lion,' uninvolved in these painful com-

plications. He thought of the Wood-nymph's threat of chastisement to her absent daughter, and wished that he might be the instrument of its execution.

The river looped suddenly. At a signal from their leader Stanley once again cupped his hands, but this time sent forth a soft far-carrying sound distinctly similar to the call of a woodpigeon. It echoed and died. Then, away to the right, came a reply.

'The little devils struck across here,' said his lordship, proceeding to cut across the promontory. 'They're by the pool below the weir, damn them! Come along!'

The river, looping back in the base of a deep S, greeted them afresh. They crossed a white wooden bridge and reached the second curve. Here willow-trees came down to the water's edge, sheltering a smooth basin of water, secretive and enticing, where a few May-fly still danced airily. Above it a second white bridge spanned the quiet current, and upon the bridge stood two lads, absorbedly throwing morsels of some food into the water. Even as the party watched a large fish rose, gulped voraciously at their offering, and disappeared.

Lord Wisbury, raising a frantic walking-stick, bellowed across the pool an inarticulate cry of wrath. Two startled heads were lifted from contemplation of the fish, two hesitant forms wavered upon the bridge. Stanley Nuttall charged forward noisily.

'What you done wi' them biscuits?' he shouted. 'You ain't ate 'em, 'ave you?'

The culprits sidled off the bridge, and appeared to be contemplating flight, but the outraged Marquess bore down upon them inescapably.

'What've you been chucking into the water?' he demanded with ominous calm.

The larger boy, a youngster with bright gipsy-dark eyes, made reply.

'We ain't done no 'arm,' he said appealingly, 'we was on'y feedin' the fish.'

'What with? What with?' Behind his pince-nez his Lordship's glance was feverish.

'Biscuits,' said the culprit, disarmingly. 'On'y them biscuits as Stanley give me. The stuff on 'em smelt funny-like and Jimmy here said as it were gone bad, so we give it to the fish. But there wasn't no trout about, only '—his eyes sparkled excitedly—'ever such a great Jack in that pool, sir; and he've a been eatin' most

of what us chucked in. 'E ain't doin' no good there, sir, be un? Summun did ought to catch he afore he've caught all the trout. Reck'n he've cleared off a good few as 'tis.'

Lord Wisbury seized Billy Iles passionately by the collar and dragged him beside him back on to the white bridge. 'A pike!' he ejaculated—'Good God, boy, what he hasn't eaten will poison the pool, but let's hope you've finished the dam' brute! How many of those filthy biscuits have you chucked in? Four?' He propelled Billy Iles's head between the bars of the bridge, and the culprit wriggled frantically, apparently under the impression that he was about to be hurled into the pool. 'Stay still!' commanded his lordship. 'Now—quite quiet for a minute and *watch*. Can you see the Jack anywhere now? My sight's not what it was.'

Billy ceased struggling and become quiescent. Away on the bank Miss James's raised hand commanded silence. Everyone froze into stillness and watched the pool. A long dramatic quietude enwrapped the whole party and seemed to endure for a century of tension. Then, somewhere in the depths of the pool, there was a dim agitation. It subsided, renewed itself, became the startled threshing of a great fish, subsided again. Down in secretive depths tragedy was taking place. Even Edward Prance, who had anticipated much greater tragedy on land, found himself slightly overawed. He was no fisherman, but he knew a man who had once been bitten by a pike. The anecdote floated vaguely through his memory as he watched the water.

Something was rising slowly, inertly, to the surface. Billy Iles wriggled his dark head free of the bridge, and cried triumphantly, 'There a be, sir! There a be!'

Wood-nymphs should go hatless. Annie Camel's mother, embracing her offspring at the school-house whence the party from the Park returned in time to witness their reunion, wore a hat such as no one, whether wood-nymph or mere mortal, should ever wear. She also wore pink artificial silk stockings and sixpenny pearls, a fawn skirt and a crudely yellow jumper. These things the old blue pinafore had hitherto concealed from the gaze of Edward Prance. The age of Dryads is definitely ended.

Nevertheless the face which she turned adoringly upon the porcine child enfolded in her trembling arms was still the glorious countenance of a brown Madonna.

### IF HE HAD BEEN KING?

'Would I had had a stalwart son or two  
From those six flimsy women whom I tried'

says King Henry in the Poet Laureate's latest book of poems.  
Listen, Mr. Masfield!

Just about three hundred years ago—on a day in 1630, to be more accurate—a sober and venerable gentleman was jotting down recollections of his past. He had been a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a fellow of Trinity Hall; he had done secret service work for the Earl of Essex on the Continent, returned to be a proctor at his university, and then spent many years as secretary to King James; but of all the men he had met, the one he most desired to write about, the most heroic and still the most attractive figure in his recollections, was the man whose granddaughter he had had the luck to marry. Brooding over that hero of his youth, he set down stately sentences:

'He was a goodly gentleman, and of the sword; and he was of a very ancient descent, as an heir to many subtracts of gentry, especially from Guy de Brian of Lawthorn: so was he of a very vast estate, and came not to Court for want, and to these advancements. He had the endowments of carriage and height of spirit, had he alighted on the alloy and temper of discretion; the defect whereof, with a native freedom and boldness of speech, drew him on to a clouded sitting. . . . He was yet a wise man and a brave courtier, but rough, and participating more of active than sedentary motions, as being in his instellation destined for arms.'

We cannot be quite sure what Sir Robert Naunton intends now and then, and even the *Oxford Dictionary* admits its ignorance of the meaning of some of his words. But is it not a fine Elizabethan pomp of phrases, a noble and musical introduction to the hero, like the drums and trumpets that usher in a pageant? So now, while our ears are full of the martial music, let us conform to antique but impressive stage tradition. Enter the Hero.

John Perrott—many authorities give him only one T, but he



deserves the solidity of two—born at Haroldstone in Pembroke-shire in 1527, and brought up with the young earl of Ormonde, at the age of eighteen entered the household of Henry VIII's Lord Treasurer and was soon taken into favour by the King. His uncle was tutor in Greek to the young prince Edward, who also enjoyed the boy's rather boisterous spirits; when he succeeded to the throne, he made John a Knight of the Bath and on several occasions paid his ever-recurring debts. Mary's accession made no great difference to John. He was not a sincere co-religionist of hers, and during her reign was caught harbouring heretics (his uncle among them) and imprisoned for it; but Mary, as soon as she heard of the gaoling, not only ordered his release at once but gave him Carew Castle to soothe his feelings. At Elizabeth's coronation he was one of the four canopy-bearers, but Elizabeth was a practical queen and had no use for courtiers she could not put to use; she began by making him vice-admiral of the seas around South Wales—an important post when Spanish and Irish pirates haunted the entrances to the Bristol and English Channels—and soon afterwards, at Ormonde's suggestion, insisted that he should take on the task of pacifying and organising Munster, which she had determined to constitute a Province. He held back; he had a love of domesticity curiously incongruous with the rest of his character, a love too of lovemaking which gave him two wives and Heaven knows how many love-wives (as the politeness of those days termed them) and numerous children<sup>1</sup>; but Elizabeth was too strong for him. In 1570 he sailed for Ireland and took Munster in hand. The rebel Fitzmaurice was his chief opponent, and in the intervals between capturing rebel strongholds and pursuing elusive guerrilla forces it struck him that it would be amusing to challenge Fitzmaurice to a duel. 'With sword and target' queried the other, naming Irish weapons. 'If you wish,' said Perrott. 'And in Irish attire?' 'By all means; and,' added John, 'so that you may know me, I have ordered my trousers to be of scarlet.' Regrettably, Fitzmaurice cried off, using the hackneyed and slightly insulting excuse that, if he killed Perrott, the Queen would have no difficulty in finding another President, but if Perrott killed him he would be dead and done with.

In the end Munster was effectively if rather truculently pacified,

<sup>1</sup> After enumerating the one child of his first marriage and the three of his second, a cautious chronicler adds: 'The rest of his children were by other Venters.'

and even Fitzmaurice had to admit it. But it was not a bully's or a conqueror's reputation that the pacifier left behind him. 'The departure of the President,' notes a contemporary recorder, 'was lamented by the poor, the widows, the feeble and the unwarlike'; the quaint thing is that the recorder did not intend that for eulogy. Once free of Ireland, John had no wish to return, and flatly refused to do so when Elizabeth in 1574 would have sent him back again. He was difficult to manage, always; he loved, as Naunton regretfully says, to stand too much alone on his legs, and from end to end of his public career other men found him very awkward to work with. The Queen gave him a chance among her counsellors at Court, but he fitted in not at all; he had 'a kind of haughtiness and repugnancy in Council.' Still, she could not afford to waste good material. So she reverted to her original use of him; he was put in charge of a squadron intended to guard the Irish coast against Spanish descents, and ordered to fill in such time as he might have to spare by raiding, and if possible exterminating, 'the disgraceful pirates of the Scilly Isles.'

Content to be once more in independent command (and within reach of his own home in western Wales), he accepted the job and set out in style. Down the Thames went the squadron—*Revenge*, *Seabright*, *Dread-Naught*, *Foresight*, and *Swiftsure*, fine names all—with John on his flagship's poop surrounded by fifty men in orange-tawny cloaks and accompanied by 'a Noyse of Musicians'; as he passed Greenwich, the Queen leant out of her window and 'shaked hir Fanne at him.' His mission was entirely successful, both in scaring away the Spaniards and in leaving the Scilly folk contemptuously alone. But Ireland was in waiting for him, and no reluctances could save him. In 1582 he was, willy-nilly, made Lord Deputy in succession to Lord Grey of Wilton, who had been recalled two years earlier.

His methods as master of all Ireland were curiously reminiscent of, yet an improvement on, those he had employed in Munster. For the Irish chiefs, if recalcitrant, he had little mercy, though he gave them their chance first. In King's and Queen's Counties he 'took pledges and assurances of all the chief Conors and Mores, since which time I have hanged most of them by justice and marshal law.' In Ulster, where a dangerous rebellion was coming to life under the stimulus of Sorley Boy M'Donnell and his escort of wild Hebrideans, he first threatened, then persuaded the other chieftains that the Scots were as great a peril to them as to him, and

after restoring peace by the Boy's expulsion, proceeded to cut up Ulster into counties (Elizabeth for some reason did not approve of this) and to subdivide the largest estates so that no chieftain should be able to rely on too many followers in case of a future rebellion. Another reform of this nature which he carried through in many parts of Ireland was the substitution—by direct agreement with the existing chiefs—of the English law of succession to estates for the Irish law. Irish 'captainries and tanistships' passed, on a chief's death, to the most ancient and warlike man of the name, with a special emphasis on the second epithet. By transferring the succession to the chief's eldest son, Perrott hoped to lessen the chances of war.

In Munster they knew him already. A rebellion was mooted there soon after his arrival in June, 1584, but the local lords would have none of it. So long, they said emphatically, as Perrott governed Ireland and Ormonde stayed in Munster, they would take no part in any rising; otherwise, 'there should not have been left one Englishman alive in the realm before Michaelmas Day.' But, while he used the chiefs sternly and with a measure of harshness, for the people at large he had a good deal of sympathy. It was afterwards one of the charges against him, made by the Anglican Chancellor-Archbishop Loftus, that he interfered with that prelate's attempts to convert the Catholic Irish to Anglicanism; 'this people,' he insisted, 'were not to be dealt with for matters of religion.' Furthermore, he took the unusual step of trusting them. Perhaps undervaluing his personal influence, perhaps forgetting to look far enough ahead, he 'imposed on the Irish the charge of bearing their own arms; which both gave them the possession, and taught them the use, of weapons.' At the moment, however, he had a very good reason for doing so, since he was thus able to despatch to the Earl of Leicester in Flanders a force of 600 soldiers and 500 kernes, and to assure Elizabeth that he could raise for her 2,000 foot-soldiers, quite half of them 'good shots, who, if not entertained by Her Majesty, are likely to adhere to the enemy.' He studied the Queen's foibles, too; he obtained for her the tax on imports of wine for ten years, raised an extra £5,000 of revenue, mainly from Connaught, and in various ways saved her another £4,500, as well as 2,000 marks on the victualling of the English troops. Also, by way of assuring the Irish that he really wished them well if only they would stay quiet, he proclaimed an amnesty for all crimes committed before 1583.

One would have imagined that such a ruler would be applauded at Court as well as in Ireland. Yet, somehow or other, he was always in hot water. If he won credit with the Queen by saving money, his enemies at Court accused him of wasting more than he saved by making excursions through the country instead of ruling it from Dublin. If he was tolerant, they charged him with favouring Jesuits. If he talked of raising troops, they suggested that he was in secret league with Philip of Spain. Elizabeth's good sense, as a rule, warned her that this sort of slander was silly, but it got on her nerves. Its chief instigator, we must remember, was Christopher Hatton, at the time her particular favourite; he had a private grudge against Perrott, who in the course of his love-adventures had seduced Hatton's daughter. So the Lord Deputy, already in continual torment from disease (he had a perpetual longing to take the Bath waters), suffered almost as continually a series of sharp rebukes for doing what he thought wise and (as he knew) Elizabeth had no good reason for thinking unwise; and every rebuke was followed closely by a soothing and applausive despatch which had just as little sound knowledge to back it. His nerves worried him, too, and in the end his always unruly tongue played him false. At a Council meeting in Dublin, just when his temper was being particularly tried, one of the soothing despatches was handed to him. He read it, and in a sort of triumph burst out: 'Aha! she is filthily afraid of the Spaniards, our Queen, so now am I her white-headed boy again!' The insult,<sup>1</sup> promptly reported to London, was too gross to go unnoticed, and Perrott was hastily recalled.

That hurt him beyond endurance. 'He reckoneth,' wrote a contemporary chronicler, 'that Ireland is the most unfortunate soil of the world. He never knew good Governor who sincerely served there but he was stung, maligned, or bitten by some means.' Yet his achievement could not easily be belittled. '*Subjugavit Ultoniam*,' ran a later admirer's epitaph, '*pacificavit Conaciam, relaxavit Mediam, ligavit Mononiam, fregit Lagentiam, extirpavit Scotos, refrænavit Anglos*.' His own claim was perhaps more characteristic of him: 'I have left the kingdom generally from sea to sea in such universal quiet and obedience as the same hath not been known in any time heretofore'; he instanced particularly that every man enjoyed his own peaceably, 'their cows being abroad quietly in the night.' Even his successor Fitzwilliam, his enemies'

<sup>1</sup> The actual words have been slightly bowdlerised.

nominee, admitted the truth of the claim, and had to content himself with grumbles that Perrott had walked off with the robes of State. His departure, as in Munster years before, was widely mourned. The poor, says Bagwell,

'came forty miles to see him pass, praying for his long life and striving to take his hand if possible, or to touch the hem of his garment. When he asked them why they did so, they answered, "that they never had enjoyed their own with peace before his time, and did doubt they should never do so again when he was gone."'

He returned to England nominally in disgrace. Yet, had he gone straight to Court and remained there, fighting Hatton at close quarters, all might have turned out well, for in 1589 he was still reported as being 'specially trusted' by the Queen. But—it may have been merely a resurgence of his subconscious domesticity, or he may have found Elizabeth's moods as unbearable as she had found her despatches—Court could not hold him. Back he went to Castle Carew; and, while he was arranging marriages for his children and repairing his dwelling-houses to spend in them a comfortable old age, Hatton was fixing up astounding charges against him. In 1590 he was arrested on a charge of high treason and hurried to the Tower; a letter had been 'discovered' in which he offered to betray Ireland to Philip of Spain on condition that he himself should be made Hereditary Prince of Wales. Before any trial could take place, the stupid falsity of this letter was evident, and the actual trial turned on his insult to the Queen and his general unruliness. It was now four years since he had left Ireland, and in Elizabeth's ageing mind his services were forgotten, his daring words remained indelible. She told the judges who condemned him that they were stupid knaves, but she confirmed the sentence.

John, who had been two years in the Tower and had frequently complained that his lodgings were insanitary, lay sick in bed. To him entered an official, with news that his sentence had been confirmed and he must expect to be beheaded in a few days. The old man sat up in bed, glared at the messenger, and said, astoundingly:

'Go back and tell the Queen she can't cut her brother's head off just to please a ballet-dancer.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hatton had died the year before; but the old man had forgotten that, or probably had never been told of it.

The scared official, after some persuasion outside, was induced to take back the message. Elizabeth sat back in her chair, pondered a moment, and then said, no less astoundingly:

‘Of course I can’t. Go and tell him he’s quite right.’

By this time John was too ill to sit up. He smiled benignly at the returned official. ‘Of course I’m right,’ he said. Then he turned on his side, and died peacefully.

The secret was out. All his life it had been whispered; if royal favour lasting almost uninterruptedly through three such reigns was not evidence enough, there was the physical likeness—‘if we compare his pictures,’ wrote Naunton, ‘his qualities, gesture, and voice with that of the king which memory retains yet amongst us’—to prove him of the blood royal. His mother, *née* Mary Berkeley, a brilliant and handsome adornment of the Court of Henry VIII, left it suddenly for the Perrott home in Wales, and never went back to London. The boy was in so many ways a Tudor, ‘very tall and strong, with auburn hair, undaunted, wise and choleric’ (how the epithets pile themselves up!); men talked of his ‘Porte and Majesty of Personage’ and compared him with Scipio and Sforza; they remembered afterwards ‘his native genius and haughtiness of spirit, which accompanied him to his last, and till, without any diminution or change therein, it brake in pieces the cords of his magnanimity’ (his great-heartedness, that is, not his benevolence). If only . . . but maybe for those perilous times of the building-up of England against Spain, Elizabeth’s diplomacy and femininity were of better service . . . still, if only Henry had wrested the law to his own liking in favour of Mary Berkeley rather than of Anne Boleyn, what a Tudor monarch might have followed him!

ARTHUR JOSE.



## THE MAJOR'S WOOING.

BY W. WINTER.

EVEN now I am not sure what was the reason of Emmeline Chambers' sudden passion for chess.

I am convinced, however, that the red-headed McShamus had something to do with it. I never could stand red-haired men. True, the late Mr. Chambers had been devoted to the game.

He would sit for hours before the board as surly as a bear, shifting the ridiculous little ivory figures about and muttering in most unparliamentary language, when Emmeline came to inform him of this, that and the other piece of local intelligence.

From him Emmeline had learned how to play the game. She had even simulated interest in knights and pawns, checks and castles, and all the unholy jargon with which chess players habitually harass their friends and acquaintances. I always considered, however, that her interest was a mere matter of duty to the late deceased, and that it would vanish together with the widow's weeds in which she looked so ravishingly attractive.

I am convinced that this would have been the case, had it not been for the red-headed McShamus. At any rate, it was not until after she had been introduced to this egregious individual at a neighbour's garden party, that she breathed a word of the startling ultimatum, with which she replied to my passionate declaration of eternal love and constancy. It was a very pretty little speech, although I say it, and I was flattering myself that it had made an impression on the charming little widow, when she dashed my hopes to the ground by the most preposterous answer which woman has ever returned to a proposal of matrimony.

'You propose very sweetly, Fitz,' she said. (My name you must understand is Fitzgerald, Major retired of the 19th Hussars.) 'You are a nice man and I like you very much, but Julius'—Julius was the late-lamented Mr. Chambers—'Julius made me promise on his death-bed that I would never marry any man who did not play chess. He said chess players were such noble true-hearted men. Now, the only chess player I know is Mr. McShamus,

so I suppose I shall have to marry him, and he is a very nice man too, but his hair is so very red, Fitz dear.'

I was furious. To think of that red-headed bespectacled chess-playing Irish scoundrel carrying off the beautiful Emmeline. It was ridiculous, absurd, an outrage on decency.

Besides, the man was an adventurer, I was sure. It was not Emmeline he was after, it was the snug little income she had inherited. A worthless fellow, one could see that at a glance.

Once in my presence he had given utterance to opinions that showed he was a Sinn Feiner. Probably he already had a wife and children somewhere in Ireland. He looked that sort of man. This I poured out with all the eloquence of which I was capable, and I can make a very pretty speech when I like, I assure you. My brother officers used to tell me that I was wasted in the Army. I ought to be in Parliament, they said.

But my arguments made no impression on Emmeline. She only shook her adorable little black head and said :

'I think you are very unjust to poor Mr. McShamus. I am sure he isn't any of those horrible things you say, and I must respect poor Julius' last wishes. He was a chess player, and he thought chess had an uplifting effect on a man's character. He would have loved Mr. McShamus.'

I ought to have left her then and there. Indeed I did move towards the door. That she should turn down a man like me who has been through three campaigns and has played polo for his regiment, in favour of this red-haired Irishman—whose only merit was pushing carved bits of wood about on a polished board—was an affront which no Fitzgerald could stand.

But as I turned to cast a last look at her, I hesitated. She was so irresistible with her big grey eyes and little piquant tilted nose. Besides, she had five hundred a year. Not that that influenced me. It was the woman I wanted and not the money, although, to be sure, five hundred a year would be a very nice little addition to a Major's retired pay.

The scandalous underpayment of retired officers has always been one of my chief causes of complaint against the British Government. If ever I do go into Parliament . . .

Still I must ask you to believe that the money did not influence me one way or another in the step I took. It was Emmeline I wanted, and I would have wanted her just the same if she had sat there without a sou.

'Very well,' I said with dignity. 'If you persist in this absurd determination I suppose I must submit to it. But I must have your definite promise. If I learn this ridiculous game and beat McShamus in, say, a month from now, will you marry me?'

She looked at me with a gleam of mischief in her grey eyes.

'Certainly, Fitz dear,' she said. 'I would much rather marry you than Mr. McShamus. I am afraid you will find it difficult though. Mr. McShamus is one of the finest chess players in England. He was second in the championship last year, and he is writing a book on the game, *Ancient and Modern Chess*, it is called.'

'I don't care if he was first,' I retorted, 'or how many books he has written. I took him to play golf once and his first shot hit the caddy in the eye. If I cannot beat a man like that, at any game that was ever invented, my name is not Fitzgerald.'

When the Fitzgeralds undertake anything they do it thoroughly. I lost no time in sending a challenge to McShamus to play a game of chess in a month's time for a stake of five pounds. I made no mention of the lady, you must realise, but I have since discovered that Emmeline gave him pretty clearly to understand the true facts of the case, and he was as aware as I was that the real stake at issue was no sordid five-pound note, but an adorable little woman with black hair, grey eyes, and a small turned-up nose.

The next thing was to learn the game, so I bought a chess-board and men, borrowed from Mudie's their entire stock of chess literature, gave orders to my servant that I was at home to no one, and set to work.

I cannot say I made much progress. After I had spent two evenings in discovering how to set up the men, I found that all the wretched little things had different ways of their own of moving. At the end of a week, it was all I could do to keep in my mind their various peculiarities, without attempting to acquire any knowledge of openings, end-games, and the rest of the box of tricks which appeared to be necessary to the complete chess-player. My head was a jumble of pawns, rooks, and queens. I dreamt about checks and mates. I used to repeat the moves to myself on my daily visits to Emmeline with the result that one nervous old lady on an omnibus, who heard me murmuring 'Knight one square straight and one diagonal,' went so far as to enquire audibly of the conductor if he thought that poor dear man was safe to be at large.

At last I came to the conclusion there was more in chess than met the eye, and I determined to engage an instructor.

I made enquiries of the man from whom I had purchased the board and men, and was directed to an underground café in the Strand, chiefly notable for its depressing silence and the extraordinary evil smell of the cigars smoked there. Here I made the acquaintance of an elderly German of the name of Zitstein, reputed to be the finest chess player in the world. He readily agreed to instruct me in the art for the moderate sum of ten shillings per lesson.

Under his tuition I made rapid progress. No longer did I need to make a fool of myself in omnibuses.

I mastered the mysteries of castling and 'en passant'. I knew the difference between a King's Gambit and a Giuoco Piano, and I discovered how to beat McShamus, should I be left with a king and a rook against his bare king.

The eve of the match found me quietly confident. It also witnessed the publication of McShamus' great book. It was Zitstein who brought the latter to my notice. He came into my study with a look of unusual exultation on his face, bearing in his hand a thick red tome which he banged triumphantly on the table in front of me.

'Here!' he exclaimed in his guttural German accent, which always grated so unpleasantly on my nerves. I hate Germans almost as much as I hate people with red hair. 'Here is a boog vich you must buy. Id is by ze great Herr McShamus, ze finest gess blayer in England. Id is galled ze ancient and modern gess. Ze author prove zat we blay much better to-day zan zey did vorty, vifty year ago. He zay "I could haf beaten ze great Morphy." As for ze old masters, Vilidor, Ruy Lopez, pah! he zay he could haf gif zem odds. Zee here he zay about me.' I checked his enthusiasm.

'Enough,' I said, 'I will have none of your McShamus. He is a red-headed Irish oaf and I detest him. Tell me, Herr Zitstein, what do you think of my play now. I am improving, eh?'

He looked at me solemnly.

'Dere are dree glasses of gess blayers,' he said, 'Zoze who blay vell, zoze who blay badly, and zoze who don't blay at all. In another siz months you will reach ze ranks of zoze who blay badly.'

I was rather damped, but I thought my lack of interest in McShamus' book had ruffled him.

'At any rate,' I replied, 'I am playing a match to-morrow with the author of that.' I pointed to the book. 'What do you think of my chances?'

He jumped from his chair as if he had been shot.

'Vat!' he almost screamed. 'You mad, vat you call looney must be. Gott in Himmel, you blay vid McShamus. I myself, I Zitztein, cannotg if him odds. In twenty, in den minutes you be mated dead, hein.'

'Anyway,' I said with dignity, 'I have agreed to play him, and the Fitzgeralds are not in the habit of drawing back from anything they have undertaken. Have the goodness then to stop muttering to yourself in German and give me a few hints. How shall I begin? Shall it be the King's Gambit or the Joking Piano or whatever you call it?' He looked at me sadly and I thought with some trepidation.

'Boor young man,' he said, 'I gannot teach you more. You should ein Herr Doctor zee. Boor young man.' He backed slowly towards the door, as if he expected me to make a murderous attack upon him, shaking his cavernous head the while and muttering to himself, 'Boor young man!' I became so enraged that I seized McShamus' accursed book and in another moment would have hurled it furiously at his head. He escaped just in time, and from my window I could see him trotting down the street as fast as his little fat legs would carry him, now and then casting nervous glances over his shoulder at the house which sheltered the lunatic who dared to play chess with McShamus. I was a long time falling asleep that night. My brain was in a whirl.

Zitstein had convinced me that there was more in chess than I had ever dreamed of. I began to fear that I had made a sad fool of myself.

I pictured the red-haired Irishman grinning sardonically as he delivered the *coup de grâce*, and I almost resolved to throw up the sponge, send McShamus his five pounds, and never see him or Emmeline any more.

But I cast away the unworthy thought. I come of a fighting stock, and never must it be said that a Fitzgerald was afraid of any red-headed Irishman. 'Happen what may,' I said to myself, 'I will die fighting.'

Revolving such thoughts in my brain I must have fallen into a fitful sleep, for all at once I heard the clock chime the hour of

three and became aware of an indefinable feeling that I was not alone. I sat bolt upright and rubbed my eyes. I had forgotten to draw the blind before getting into bed, and the moonlight was streaming in through the open window, lighting up every object in the room as though it were broad daylight.

There was nothing unusual to be seen, but from the adjoining study there came a faint murmuring sound as of someone swearing softly to himself in an unknown language. This was followed by a loud bang, as if a book or some similar object had been thrown violently on the floor. At the same time the sensation of some strange presence came upon me with redoubled intensity.

I slipped quietly out of bed, and picked up my Army revolver which I always keep at my bedside.

'If it is burglars,' I thought, 'I'll soon settle them.'

Boldly I threw open the folding door, which divided my bedroom from the study, then stood stock-still, paralysed.

In my best arm-chair, still muttering angrily and glaring with a look of malignant hatred at McShamus' book which lay open on the floor, sat the most awful apparition I have ever beheld. He or it, I do not know which to say, was a tall gaunt figure clad in a priest's gown, and wearing a black skull-cap on its head. Its face and hands were absolutely fleshless and covered with a dull parchment-like skin through which I could distinguish every bone. Most horrible of all, which made my hair stand on end and my teeth chatter with a dread I have never known before or since, the whole figure seemed faintly luminous and transparent; so not only did the creature's bones shine through its black covering, but I could also see right through its body to the tapestried back of the chair on which it sat.

The ferocious hatred which gleamed from its sunken eyes as it gazed on McShamus' book was devilish.

'Who are you?' I cried, my hand shaking so that I could scarcely level my revolver. 'Speak or I fire.'

The apparition looked up.

'You cannot harm me,' it said, its voice grating like the sound of a rusty file, 'I have been dead four hundred years.' I felt my flesh go cold.

The thing rose slowly to its feet. 'I am here,' it continued, pointing dramatically at McShamus' book, 'because of that, because a miserable mortal has dared to publish in a book that he could give Ruy Lopez odds. Man, I am Ruy Lopez!'



The name somehow seemed familiar. 'I thought you were an opening,' I managed to stammer.

'I am the inventor of the opening. I am the greatest chess player of all time. I have played before kings and princes. And yet this miserable McShamus, whom in our day we would have spat on, has dared to say that he could give me odds.'

The thing's voice broke and I could have sworn that it was actually weeping. I almost felt sorry for it.

'But I will have revenge,' it continued, its voice rising to a screech. 'In my lonely tomb in far-off Spain I heard of this insult and I have come here to avenge myself. You—' the creature took a step towards me with a ferocious gesture which made me sink on my knees—'you shall be the instrument of my vengeance.'

I began to gather courage as I saw that my ghostly visitor did not appear to entertain any hostile designs towards myself, but reserved all his ferocity for McShamus and his book.

'How can I help you?' I enquired. 'I don't like McShamus and it is rather bad form to insult a ghost, but . . .'

With a wave of its bony arm the apparition interrupted me.

'You are playing him this afternoon,' it chortled, an expression of fiendish glee overspreading its ghastly features, 'and you will win. A fine chess player truly, who boasts that he could give Ruy Lopez odds and is beaten by Major Fitzgerald. I shall be there though you alone will see me, and to-day McShamus will be shamed in the eyes of all men.'

As he spoke his voice seemed to be growing fainter and fainter, his form gradually became less distinct, a breath of cold air swept through the room and I was alone. I went back to bed and pinched myself to make sure I was awake. Chess must be turning my brain, I thought. I made up my mind that after this business was over, I would give it up and pay more attention to diet. It was clear that my digestion was not what it used to be.

The great game was to be played at the underground café where I had first met Zitstein. When I entered, punctual to time, I found a large crowd assembled, and felt all eyes turn upon me, as I marched, with soldierly step, to the table at which McShamus was already seated. No doubt it was my appearance which attracted attention.

Although I say it myself, I am a fine figure of a man, and that afternoon I had dressed with more than my usual care. A Fitzgerald, I felt, should look a Fitzgerald even among chess players.

'Faith,' said McShamus, as I sat down. 'I'm glad to see ye. I suppose ye'll be entering for the championship next, Major? Will ye have white or shall we toss for move?'

I said I would toss, called correctly, and looked round with my most martial air, while I tried to remember what Zitstein had told me was the best way to begin.

What followed I have never breathed to a soul, for I know I should not be believed. Indeed if anyone had told me the incidents of this amazing game I should have put him down as the biggest liar since Munchausen, yet I can assure you it happened in every detail just as I am writing it here.

As I was racking my brain over my first move, I felt a bony hand grip my wrist, and looking up in surprise I beheld standing by my side the same ghostly figure which had sat in my arm-chair at three o'clock that morning.

It was evident nobody else saw anything unusual. McShamus sat unconcernedly waiting for my move, casting sly glances at the spectators as though he were amused by my delay. The others were puffing their vile cigars and whispering amongst themselves, but as clearly as I saw any one of them, I saw the form of Ruy Lopez, and felt him raise my arm from my side, place my fingers on a pawn and gently push it along the board. And so the game went on. As soon as McShamus made a move that ghostly hand clutched my wrist and with my fingers impelled some piece or other to its appointed place. I had no more to do with the moves I made than if I had been a piece of wood.

The spectators, who were at first inclined to be facetious, crowded round, gazing at the board with intense interest. In the early part of the game, McShamus played almost as rapidly as I did, now he pondered deeply between each move, ruffling his hair with his hand until it stood out round his head like a crimson halo. It was clear that he was astonished at the strength of the game I was playing.

Zitstein stood behind my chair, and several times I could hear his guttural German voice saying 'Goot, goot!' as I, or rather my ghostly guide, made a move. We had been playing for about an hour and a half when the apparition appeared to be in a dilemma. Instead of moving almost instantly as it had done before, it hesitated for nearly ten minutes, its fingers clutching my wrist so fiercely that I feared it would break, while the parchment-like skin on its forehead was furrowed in a deep frown. At last it raised

my hand, and forced me to move my queen to a square on which even I could see she could be taken by my opponent's bishop. I strove to resist, but I could not.

I heard a gasp of relief from McShamus. He looked at the position for a moment, then he quietly took the queen, and the spectators, evidently believing the game over, began to move away amid a buzz of suppressed laughter at my egregious blunder.

All except Zitstein. He had moved to the side of the board, and was staring at it with eyes that seemed to be starting out of his head. I looked at Ruy Lopez. His fleshless features wore an expression of fiendish triumph. He seized my knight and banged it down on the board, this time dispensing altogether with my aid, but so intense was the excitement of both McShamus and Zitstein that neither noticed the piece had moved apparently of its own accord. 'Check' hissed the apparition, McShamus moved his king, and instantly the ghostly fingers replied.

The look of exultation left McShamus' face. He thought deeply, beads of sweat appeared on his brow, he tore his hair, then with a full-blooded Irish oath, he sprang from his chair, sent the board and men flying from the table with one sweep of his arm and rushed from the room.

At first I thought he had gone mad, then I realised that, in some miraculous way, I had won. Zitstein seized my hand.

'Vonderful,' he said, intense admiration in his voice. 'I gongratulate you. I haf never made a viner gombination myself. Id is mate in den moves. You will go var, young man, you will go var.'

As I took his hand, I looked round for Ruy Lopez. He had vanished. I never saw him again, and, in spite of the entreaties of both Zitstein and McShamus, I always refuse to play in public.

Whenever they see me they shake their heads as over a wasted life, and urge me to enter my name for some competition or other.

What would they say if they knew that I cannot even beat Emmeline?

## WORKSHOP CASUALTIES!

BY W. F. WATSON.

It is an astonishing fact, little known to the average person, that since the beginning of the industrial era, industry has accounted for far more casualties—through disease and accidents—than warfare! The casualties of war cannot, of course, be strictly regarded as accidents. After all, the business of war is for each side to deliberately endeavour to cause as many casualties as possible—and in a minimum of time—among the ranks of the enemy. Indeed, it is usually by accident that one escapes unscathed from the field of battle. The combatants are killed and wounded quickly, in a wholesale fashion, as it were—peace brings an end to casualties. But industry goes on all the time, taking its toll of accidents continuously, despite the fact that it is the purpose of industry to prevent them.

One's sympathy always goes out to the maimed soldier or sailor. We listen with rapture to the graphic story of how Leonard lost a leg at Lille. Here is a hero who should be bedecked with medals and properly pensioned by a grateful country. But when Bill, the mechanic, tells us how his leg was torn off through getting mixed up in the machinery at a munitions factory, we are apt to get a little bit bored. What an ass to be sure! Fancy doing a thing like that! He should have been more careful! Of course, he got Workmen's Compensation! It doesn't seem to occur to us that Bill might also deserve a medal and a pension!

It is not that we are unsympathetic towards industrial workers; far from it. It is simply because a traditional glamour of glory surrounds warfare (which is primarily destructive) that does not surround industry (which is mainly constructive). It is one of the curious anomalies of our civilisation!

A big mine explosion, involving many deaths, may bring industrial dangers sharply home to us, and we offer up fervent thanks that we, at least, are not miners; but the sensation so caused rarely lasts longer than the proverbial seven days' wonder—or the inquest. Similarly, it is only when we read of a factory fire or explosion that we realise that workshops have any dangers at all. If the eye does catch one of those little paragraphs which so

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frequently appear, tucked away in the general news, reporting the death or serious injury of a workman, I'm afraid we usually pass it with very little comment, beyond expressing the opinion that it was probably the man's own fault. Some day, maybe, we will erect a Cenotaph to the memory of those industrial heroes who lost their lives whilst engaged in producing the necessities of life.

'Surely,' it may be contended, 'there cannot be *many* workshop accidents in these days of Factory Acts, industrial psychology, modern improvements and safety-first devices!' In spite of all these things workshop casualties are of hourly occurrence. One insurance company alone deals with an average of no fewer than 16,000 accidents a year, 95 per cent. of which happen in engineering factories.

Many big establishments carry a well-equipped casualty station, with a staff of trained nurses—and in some instances a qualified doctor—constantly on duty. Each department has a first-aid box, and a skilled first-aid ambulance man, so that however minor the accident it can be attended to immediately. There is direct communication between the departments and the casualty station. At any time of the day (or night if the factory is running) one will always find the nurses busily attending to patients; sometimes it will be just like a hospital.

The majority of casualties are relatively trivial, if painful—a piece of metal in the eye, cut fingers, lacerated face and hands, followed by septic poisoning, a crack on the head, burns, bruises, broken legs and arms, sprained ankles, sudden faintness, and the like—but there are more than a few serious cases, as any trade union organiser knows. The motor ambulance is quickly summoned, and the patient is taken to the nearest hospital. An organiser of my own union, the A.E.U., recently said that his experience is that the number of fatal factory accidents has decreased in recent years, the number of serious injury cases seem to remain static, whilst the number of minor accidents have tremendously increased. We will try and discover why such should be the case, for which purpose it will be necessary to retrace our steps.

The regulation of labour in some form or another, either by custom, royal authority, ecclesiastical rules, or by formal legislation, is probably as old as the most ancient form of civilisation. The early labour legislation made no pretence about safeguarding the health and safety of the workman, it aimed at maintaining the standard of production, regulating wages, piece prices and

payment in kind, compelling labourers and artisans to enter involuntary service, enforcing contracts between master and man. From the close of the seventeenth century, and during the eighteenth, labour legislation took the form of regulating the summary powers of justices of the peace in matters of dispute between employer and servant.

It is interesting to note that although the endeavour to enforce labour apart from a contract died out towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was a general tendency in favour of developing early industrial training of children. As a matter of fact, it was a special effort of 'charitable' and 'philanthropic' endeavour to found houses of industry, in which little children, even under five years of age, might be trained for apprenticeship with employers, presumably to prevent future unemployment and vagrancy by training in habits of industry, but actually, as was admitted, because 'from children thus trained up to constant labour, we may venture to hope for the lowering of its price.'

The evils and abuses of this pernicious system gave the first impulse to the labour legislation for which the latter part of the nineteenth century is so famous, but it needed the concentration and prominence of suffering and injury to child life in the factories to secure parliamentary intervention.

Factory conditions generally at that time, particularly in the chemical, alkali, match and white lead industries, and among nail makers, chain makers, slipper makers, and tailors, were so appalling that a storm of indignation swept the country. Public-spirited newspaper proprietors sent journalists amongst the workers to conduct enquiries, and the terrible sufferings were fearlessly exposed in the Press.

Professor Huxley, always a keen student of social conditions, was moved to say:

'I do not hesitate to express the opinion that if there is no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family; if it is true that the increase of knowledge, the winning of a greater domination over nature, are to make no difference in the extent and intensity of want, with its concomitant physical and moral degradation amongst the masses of the people, I would hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation.'

These exposures, much more than the efforts of the workers themselves, focused public attention on the evils, and forced



Parliament to institute legislation. Various Acts regulating hours and conditions, and minimising the dangers, were passed, culminating in the Act of 1901. This was indeed a revolutionary Act. It made provision for proper sanitation, safety, fitness for employment, and contained special regulations for dangerous trades. Security in the use of machinery was provided for by precautions regarding the cleaning of machines in motion, and working between machines driven by power. The fencing of all machines was insisted upon, and inspectors were empowered to obtain an order from the court prohibiting the use of machinery, ways, works or plant, which cannot be used without danger to life or limb. Reporting accidents was obligatory—dangerous premises were condemned. Occupiers of factories were liable for penal compensation not exceeding £100 in cases of injury or death due to neglect of the Act.

But despite the vigilance of the army of inspectors employed to enforce the regulations, workshops remained unhealthy and dangerous for years afterwards. Indeed, there are plenty of insanitary and unsafe shops to-day ; employers are frequently fined for not observing the regulations of the Factory Acts.

The machines of forty years ago were built without guards, the gears were exposed to the wandering fingers of the absent-minded workman. Cutters were unguarded, shafting and belts were fixed anywhere with no regard to safety. Emery wheels and grindstones were unprotected, and there were no regulations forbidding the cleaning of machinery whilst in motion. Consequently men were continually getting their clothes and fingers caught up. A man was not then looked upon as a qualified mechanic unless he had a noticeable scar, or a missing finger !

It is strange how accidents happen. Here are a few true stories. Early one morning, before breakfast, Harry Russle, an apprentice, having just finished turning a job on a four-inch mandrel, asked a fellow-apprentice to give him a lift.

‘ I can manage this end, Bill,’ he said. ‘ You take the other ! ’

But the job weighed over a hundredweight, and Harry over-rated his strength. The thing slipped, neatly splitting Bill’s thumb to the first joint. On his way back from the hospital Bill met his father who, like many mechanics of the period, rarely went to work before breakfast.

‘ Hullo ! ’ he exclaimed when he saw the lad’s thumb in bandages. ‘ What have you done ? ’ Bill explained what had hap-

pened. 'Huh!' grunted the old man. 'Well, you've got your trade-mark now!'

We were standing about the shop one Saturday morning, waiting for the hooter to go. For no reason whatever, a chap went to rub some grease off the gears of his lathe whilst it was running on top speed. Before one could say Jack Robinson, the waste got caught, and with it the man's fingers. They were so mangled that the tops of two had to be cut off.

A similar case occurred at Maudslay's, when the factory was along the Westminster Bridge Road. Whilst cleaning a radial drill a man's hand was drawn into the mitre gears the sharp edges of which completely severed the four fingers, close to the palm. The pressure was so great that the ends of the stumps were closed—there was no blood. Holding out his maimed hand, the man walked round the shop saying, 'Look what I've done!'

When he had been taken to the hospital, an old fitter, one of the last to wear a top-hat and frock-coat, picked up the fingers, carefully laid them out on the bench in their proper order, and covered them with his silk hat, which was green with age. He then invited us all to have a peep, and as each one filed past, old Sam lifted his hat, exposed the digits and then covered them again for the next man!

A lad was doing a job on a milling machine. The brush with which he applied the lubricant fell to the floor. In stooping to reclaim it, he rested his left hand on the table of the machine which was travelling towards the cutter. The hand went under the cutter, and the lad lost the tops of all his fingers.

A man wants all his wits about him when working a machine. Half a second miscalculation may mean a serious accident. Many years ago, a man was working a big planing machine. He was a clever and careful mechanic. One day, in a moment's abstraction, he went to look at his job just as the table was on the return stroke. Unable to withdraw in time, his head was caught between the job and the upright of the machine. He was decapitated!

Personally, I never thought it necessary to lose a finger in order to qualify as a mechanic, but I had two narrow squeaks. Early one morning, I was drilling a casting with an inch twist drill, when taper-shank drills were very scarce. The method we adopted was to fasten a carrier to the drill shank, and feed up with the centre. It was quite safe whilst cutting through solid metal, but one had to be extremely careful as the point of the drill

broke through the metal. In order to safeguard against accident, we held the drill back whilst feeding in gingerly until it was completely through. This I did, and thinking I had finished the hole, I gave the poppit wheel a sharp turn. I had made a mistake. The drill ran forward, the carrier came round, and the head of the bolt entered the palm of my left hand. Someone rushed and stopped the machine, and I pulled the bolt head out of my hand. It was a nasty gash. All the tendons were exposed but, fortunately for me, none were either broken or torn. I was extremely lucky—the wound healed in less than a month, and beyond a scar, which has befogged many an amateur palmist, my hand is quite all right.

On another occasion, I had the job of boring a huge gear wheel. To set it true in the lathe, I used a piece of chalk, holding it on the saddle so that it would touch the high places as the job revolved. One bolt, slightly longer than the others, glanced down the nail of the third finger of my left hand, tearing away the flesh, Another quarter of an inch and the top would have fallen among the dirt. As I had only been there a few days after a spell of unemployment, I just wrapped a bit of dirty rag round it (there was no first-aid box in the shop) and went on with my work ; I feared the sack. It was not until we knocked off work that I had it properly dressed. But I got the sack just the same . . . ! It's a wonder I did not get septic poisoning !

It may not be generally known that Dave Burns, brother to the Rt. Hon. John Burns, had both his legs broken whilst erecting machinery in Napier's factory when the firm first moved to Acton. It is said of him that although suffering terrible pain, he coolly directed his mates how to lift him properly on the stretcher.

Men have been whirled to their death through getting their clothes caught in belts, shafting and pulleys when oiling machinery in motion. Heavy unguarded belts have snapped, curled round the body of a passing workman and dashed him against the wall, floor or ceiling. Flying pieces of burst grindstones and emery wheels have inflicted terrible injuries, often resulting in death. The number of boys and girls, men and women, who have had their fingers amputated under a press or guillotine must be enormous. Women were compelled to wear mob-caps at work because many were literally scalped !

I well remember the passing of the Act of 1901 ; A copy had to be exhibited in a prominent place in every factory. Although

it was compulsory to report all accidents, employers were not compelled to insure their workmen for compensation, so small employers who, either because they objected to, or could not afford the premiums, neglected to report accidents, and the workmen were afraid to say anything for fear of the sack! Primitive first-aid boxes, containing sticking plaster, a few rolls of bandages, and a bottle of Friar's Balsam, found their way into some shops. But as these were usually stuck on a bench where they could get covered in dirt, and were handled by men with filthy hands, they were of little use.

We spent hours making weird guards for the gears, milling cutters, presses, guillotines, saws, and the like, which sometimes made them more dangerous and were often discarded as soon as they were made. Then there would be a surprise visit from an inspector. Whilst the manager kept him in the office as long as possible, the foreman rushed frantically round the shop, bullying labourers and mechanics into erecting guards and tidying up the shop, so that everything would be in order when the inspector came along.

Notices forbidding repairs to overhead gear, oiling, or putting on belts whilst the machinery was running, were posted everywhere. Electric bell pushes were conveniently placed so that when an accident occurred, the engine driver could be instantly signalled and the engine stopped.

It is true to say that the trade unions did much to compel employers to observe the regulations of the Act. If a member met with an accident, he had to report it to his branch, and if necessary legal assistance was rendered, and employers soon found it profitable to insure all workmen.

I'm very much afraid that we often ignored the notices. Fancy telling us not to put a belt on whilst the shafting was running! Or not to repair or oil up the countershaft! Did they think we were little children, or what! The first thing we did when we went to the guillotine or a press was to remove the guard. As a result, there were still plenty of casualties, despite the Act.

In those rather easy-going days, it did not matter a great deal if a man was away with a smashed finger—the blooming job could wait. It was considered very bad taste for anyone to take the job of a man who was away temporarily disabled. But when scientific management, mass production, and the departmentalisation of work came along, each man's job became so

dependent upon another man's operation, that if one was away from his job for even a few hours, the whole sequence of operations might be held up. To-day, if one operation is stopped for a few seconds, the whole shop is delayed.

From that time commenced the 'safety-first' campaign. Machine tool-makers produced machines with all gears covered in. Just glance at a modern tool—not a gear wheel is exposed! Electricity has made it possible for each machine to be a separate unit, thus abolishing overhead gear, belts and pulleys. New factories are built with every regard to health and safety. They are lofty, airy and light. Vacuum plants draw off the dust, fans keep the atmosphere circulating, up-to-date hot and cold air plants keep the place cool in summer and warm in winter. Washing facilities are provided, although they are not always used, and the lavatories are clean, if not always decorous.

Warnings and safety-first notices are exhibited all over the place, and, generally speaking, the workman of to-day is cleaner and more careful. The insurance companies spend a considerable amount of money annually in popularising safety-first devices. The National Institute of Industrial Psychology, the Industrial Welfare Council, and similar bodies devote a lot of time to making work safer for the operator. In addition, vast improvements have been made in emery wheels—they are practically unbreakable, and are so guarded that in the event of one bursting, the pieces cannot escape. Tools are safer to handle, castings and steel are better to machine.

Why is it, then, that there are so many accidents? Let us examine, first of all, the psychology of accidents. Moving objects have an uncanny attraction for lots of people. I often think that this accounts for many road accidents. A person crossing the road is irresistibly drawn towards the approaching vehicle, and either walks towards it or stands spell-bound until knocked down. And by the same token, the vehicle driver will be drawn towards a hurrying pedestrian.

It is a noticeable fact that many people feel a keen desire to put their hands on a moving wheel or cutter—I have often experienced such a feeling—and it requires some self-control to keep the hands away.

'What the devil made me do that? Silly ass . . .!' we exclaim when we get a nasty cut.

It's not so very long ago that I was machining a cylindrical

box cutter, the blades being let into a mandrel. There was a brush on the lathe, but I must needs knock the chips from the tool with my fingers. There was no need to touch the thing at all. Of course, I did it once too often, gashed my finger and all but lost the top!

The following story, incredible though it may seem, is perfectly true. There were two guillotine shears in a shop I worked in, one small and light, the other big and heavy. A boy was operating the smaller machine one day, when he suddenly shouted; he had cut off the top of his finger, just above the first joint. A shopmate rushed to his assistance and, probably acting on the spur of the moment (he may possibly have done it facetiously, or as an experiment) he picked up the piece, stuck it on the finger and, using a stick of wood as an improvised splint, bound it up tightly. *That piece of finger grafted itself on to the stump, and whilst it was certainly not a neat job, the finger was made whole!* The doctor's explanation was that the health and youth of the boy made it possible.

A few days later another boy was sent to use the guillotine; within ten minutes he went to the foreman with a face as white as chalk.

'I can't work that guillotine, sir!'

'Can't work it!' The foreman was puzzled. Any fool can work a guillotine! 'What do you mean, can't work it? Why?'

'I don't know, sir!' The boy was thoroughly scared. 'But whilst I'm standing there I feel I *must* stick my fingers between the knives!'

'Nonsense, boy! don't be silly. Go and try again.'

The lad was terrified, he began to tremble, and flatly refused to go near the machine.

'Timid young beggar!' laughed a mechanic when told about it and asked to finish the job. 'Why, there's nothing the matter with the thing!'

A quarter of an hour later that bold mechanic was in the foreman's office, beads of perspiration on his brow.

'Phew!' he exclaimed. 'Look here! I believe there *is* something wrong with that blinking guillotine. I've had a narrow squeak, I can tell you . . . nearly had my hand off . . . seemed as though I *had* to shove it near the knives. . . !'

Others tried, and all told the same story; the thing was be-



witched ! It got so bad that nobody could be persuaded to use it, and it was eventually scrapped.

'Pooh !' sceptics may scoff, 'Superstition, that's all it is. Fancy being afraid of the thing just because a boy lost his finger. . . !'

It is not quite so simple as all that. The more likely explanation is that whilst operating the tool, the mind subconsciously wanders to the boy, we wonder how he came to get his finger in the way, and we feel impelled to follow suit. Who has not heard a little voice say, 'I wonder what it feels like to lose a finger !' I have more than once. And the machine seems to reply, 'Why not try it ? You're very clever, you can do what you like with me. But be careful, lest I get you. . . !'

'Familiarity breeds contempt' is a frightfully hackneyed phrase, but a true one. Workmen continually take quite unnecessary risks, and all the safety-first propaganda and devices in the world will not stop them. Remonstrances and warnings are of no avail. It is bravado rather than carelessness.

'Dangerous ! Why, there's nothing in it ! I've done it hundreds of times.'

Sid Bourne had to erect lifting tackle over his lathe. The proper course was to get a ladder, but that being at the far end of the shop it was quicker and easier to clamber on to the machine and stand on the chuck. He had done it before—we all do it. But this time the swing of the chain knocked the striking handle, the lathe started up in back gear, poor old Sid fell, and was jammed between the chuck and the bed of the lathe. It's a wonder the man was not killed. He was badly mangled, however, and for ten months he lay in hospital ruminating on the foolhardiness of taking risks. Nearly two years elapsed before he was able to resume work.

Many accidents are unforeseen and purely accidental. A man was hardening a high-speed tool by making it white hot, almost melting, and plunging it in oil. The oil burst into flames, caught his overalls which were saturated with lard oil, and in a second the man was like a blazing torch. Despite the gallant efforts of his shopmates to smother him with sacks, he died of shock.

One cannot prevent tools breaking. Whilst cutting a groove in a small gear wheel, the thin tool snapped, the piece went straight to my eye and smashed the lens of the glasses I had taken to only a month previously. The eye escaped injury. On another

occasion, a flying chip from a chisel cut the eyeball ; that casualty put me on the sick list for three weeks, without pay, of course. Wages invariably cease as soon as the accident occurs.

A man may enter a claim under the Workmen's Compensation Act by reporting the case at once, but he will get no pay unless and until he has been away three days, when he receives half-pay up to thirty shillings a week, without prejudice to any subsequent claim for disablement. Then there is a battle royal with the insurance company. It is said that there can be no sentiment in business, but insurance companies are really quite soulless.

Upon being discharged from hospital, Sid Bourne, whose case has been cited, was certified by his doctor to be no longer fit to follow his ordinary occupation as turner, so he entered a claim for compensation through the union. Liability was admitted, but the insurance company's doctor considered Sid fit for light employment, which was offered by the firm. Acting on advice, Sid accepted, and was put to work on a lighter machine. Had he 'chucked a dummy' during the day, and fallen down beside his machine, he would probably have got the £175 claimed (the company offered £125) without further ado, but dear old Sid was a conscientious workman, simple, unsophisticated, though past middle age. He thought his case would be strengthened by making a show, even though he was in great pain all the time. He was rewarded by the immediate withdrawal of the offer, and it took months of further negotiation to secure its renewal. I happen to know that Sid was reduced to penury—he had exhausted Union benefit—whilst the insurance company higgled over a few paltry pounds ! The chances are that he would not have got a bean had it not been for the Union.

Pages could be filled with similar cases. If a man renounces his claim by accepting light employment, in nine cases out of ten he will be sacked on some pretext within a few months. To counteract this, the Union fights for a Declaration of Liability, so that, should a man be subsequently incapacitated, even though it be years afterwards, the claim can be renewed. It should be said that employers generally are sympathetic, but the insurance companies rule.

Eye troubles account for numerous casualties. No matter how careful one may be, particles from the emery wheel, scale from bar metal and forgings, and cuttings, persist in finding their way into the eye. Some men are expert at turning over the lid and

extracting the offending piece—I have handled hundreds of eyes, including my own—with the aid of a mirror. But when the piece is deeply embedded, it's a case for the hospital or casualty station. That's always a two days' job. And the pain. . . !

Firms like Vickers provide goggles with unbreakable lenses, but the chaps cannot be persuaded to wear them. I'm not sure that I would.

Metal is now machined at such a speed that the cuttings leave the tool blue with heat and fly all over the place, frequently towards the face. One instantly shuts the eye, and the piece goes either in the corner or sticks on the lid. The sudden and intense pain causes one to contract the muscles, making matters worse—the flesh is seared, the eyes, nose and mouth water, and one feels very miserable, but we remain at work . . . ! I've had hot turnings fly up the nostrils, in the ears, on the tongue, down the neck ! And our shopmates laugh like the devil when we execute a war dance to the tune of choice workshop expletives !

One day, during the War, a charming lady flag-seller came in the shop. Knowing my rooted objection to being pestered by pretty girls selling flags, one of the chaps sent her to me ; as she approached I walked away from the machine. It so happened that I was machining the face of an aluminium crank case, and the hot chips were flying all over the place—it was not practicable to erect a guard. As the girl passed the front of the machine, a piece flew in the corner of her eye. Poor lass ! I knew what she suffered. But she was a good little sport. Wryly smiling through her tears, she graciously accepted my abject apologies, admitting that it was not my fault.

When machining chrome-nickel-steel, the turnings peel off like coils of wire with razor-like edges. Woe betide the turner if they curl round the hands, as they often do, severely lacerating them. Septic poisoning frequently follows, due to the impurities in the cutting lubricant, and the dirt.

I am not so sure that it would be good to eliminate all risks from the workshop. The spice of difficulty and danger makes the job more interesting and attractive ; it also tends to keep us continually alert. But the number of casualties would be considerably reduced if the workers themselves took full advantage of the safety-first devices, and insisted upon an adequate first-aid service. The men are not altogether to blame, however. In these days of high-speed rush and tear, there is no time allowed for

taking precautions. There are goggles at the emery wheel, but it takes time to put them on and off, others are waiting to grind, the job is in a hurry, so we chance it!

There should be a first-aid box in every shop, placed in the most accessible spot. It should be kept locked and free from dust and dirt, and the key should be in the charge of a man known to all. Two seconds may make all the difference between a clean cut and septic poisoning. But let any man insist upon this in a shop where such things are lax—he will most likely be sacked on some pretext or other!

When a man gashes his hand, gets a speck of grit in his eye, or some such casualty, he roundly curses the fates, not because he has injured himself, but because it may mean loss of wages, possibly the sack! He quickly ties it up with a bit of rag, or endures the eye pain, and remains at work. What happens? Septic poisoning sets in, or the eye gets worse because of the tendency for the grit to work towards the pupil. Immediate treatment would avoid such contingencies.

It is fudge and nonsense to say 'it's the man's fault.' A workman no more courts casualties than does the soldier on the battlefield! Whether it is pure accident, neglect or carelessness, it happens while the man is working in the interests of the firm, and he should not be penalised by loss of wages or fear of dismissal.

I hold the view that an industrial worker who meets with an accident at work has the right to the best treatment possible, to full wages whilst away from work, guaranteed employment upon recovery, an adequate pension if permanently disabled, and compensation for dependents if killed.

But such a desirable condition of things will be achieved only when we more fully appreciate the value of the men and women who daily risk health, life and limb in the factories, producing all the necessary things which help to make our lives so smooth and pleasant!

## ROBERT FITZROY AND CHARLES DARWIN.

IN August, 1831, one hundred years ago, Charles Darwin received the first tentative proposals through Professor Henslow, of Cambridge, that he should accompany Captain Robert FitzRoy, R.N., 'on a trip to Tierra del Fuego, and home by the East Indies . . . more as companion than mere collector.' A momentous proposal of far-reaching issue which brought two curiously divergent personalities into closest contact, and led to five years of ideal training for Darwin's maturing mind, unfolding to his eager scrutiny a panorama of natural fact with the details of which he filled the notebooks that became the storehouse for his later evolutionary work.

Darwin's acceptance hung perilously in the balance for one breathless week. His father, Dr. Robert Darwin, was opposed to the scheme and Charles despatched a reluctant refusal. He posted up to Maer the next day, to the home of his uncle Josiah Wedgwood, all hope of the voyage abandoned, to be ready for his much-loved shooting on September 1. He showed the sympathetic family the summary he had drawn up of his father's objections, eight in number. The first ran: 'Disreputable to my character as a clergyman hereafter'; and the last: 'That it would be a useless undertaking.' The Wedgwood family were all in favour of the adventure and Josiah wrote to Dr. Robert categorically answering each item on the list. In reply to the first he wrote: 'I should not think that it would be in any degree disreputable to his character as a clergyman. I should on the contrary think the offer honourable to him; and the pursuit of Natural History, though certainly not professional, is very suitable to a clergyman.' To the last objection of its 'uselessness' he wrote: 'The undertaking would be useless as regards his profession, but looking on him as a man of enlarged curiosity, it affords him such an opportunity of seeing men and things as happens to few.' Dr. Darwin yielded to the wisdom of Josiah Wedgwood, and the verdict was hastily reversed.

By September 5, Robert FitzRoy and Charles Darwin had met and the scene was laid, with the *Beagle* as stage. We have

records of their mutual impressions after this interview. FitzRoy writes of Darwin to Captain Beaufort, the Admiralty Hydrographer: 'I like what I see of him much, and I now request that you will apply for him to accompany me as Naturalist.' Darwin on the same evening writes to his sister of FitzRoy: 'It is no use attempting to praise him as much as I feel inclined to do, for you would not believe me,' and very soon he becomes 'my beau idéal of a Captain.' After the first few weeks at sea FitzRoy writes home to the Hydrographer: 'Darwin is a very sensible, hard-working man, and a very pleasant mess-mate. I never saw a "shore-going fellow" come into the ways of a ship so soon and so thoroughly as Darwin.' After several months at sea he writes again: 'Darwin is a regular Trump,' and in the same year comments thus on the first collection of specimens sent home: 'I fancy that though of small things it is numerous and valuable, and will convince the Cantabrigians that their envoy is no Idler.'

To-day, after the lapse of one hundred years, FitzRoy's fame is largely a reflected glory from Darwin's pages. But his reputation has a far wider basis and is founded on a life of strenuous activity and fine achievement. In following him along his doomed path we can trace throughout the dual strands of an austere sacrifice of all to duty, side by side with a perversity of judgment and lack of discernment. The young man of dominating personality, as Darwin first knew him, became more and more imbued with intellectual intolerance until he reached the crisis some thirty years later, when he ended tragically by his own hand.

Robert FitzRoy was born in 1805. He was the grandson of the third Duke of Grafton on his father's side, and of the first Marquis of Londonderry on his mother's. He was therefore a direct descendant of Charles II. His mother was Lady Frances Anne Stewart, sister of Lord Castlereagh.

He entered the Navy with some distinction, and for eight years commanded H.M.S. *Beagle*, a brig of 235 tons; from 1828-30 on a surveying voyage under the orders of Captain King who commanded the accompanying vessel the *Adventure*, and from 1831-6 when he was reappointed to continue alone the survey of the same coasts, accompanied by the obscure young naturalist who was to bring world-renown to the small sailing vessel. It was on board the *Beagle* that the word 'port' was first substituted for 'larboard'—a small point but indicative of much of FitzRoy's effort. He was one of those workers whose achievements are accepted as



part and parcel of history with little or no acknowledgment. It was he who later in life instituted weather forecasts or storm-warnings, which have had such far-reaching subsequent developments. His coastal survey of South America was an admirable piece of work; moreover he carried a chain of Meridian Distances round the world.

After his return to England in 1836 his activities were many. He published a *Sailing Guide to S. America*, and works on meteorology and the barometer; indeed a barometer of his design is still associated with his name. In 1841 he stood as the Conservative candidate for Durham. The retirement of a second Conservative candidate, a Mr. Sheppard, led to a violent quarrel, a challenge, and an ignoble scene outside the United Services Club. Mr. Sheppard said: 'Captain FitzRoy, I will not strike you, but consider yourself horse-whipped.' FitzRoy replied by striking at his face with an umbrella and knocking him down. Officers of high rank decided that FitzRoy could not give Sheppard a meeting, so both resorted to childish vituperation in print.

In 1843 FitzRoy was appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief in New Zealand, and here again he made inveterate enemies. His missionary zeal and over-confidence in the native led him into direct conflict with the large body of settlers who were suffering from Maori outrages, and his reckless financial policy where retrenchment was called for, caused the bitterest feeling on the part of the New Zealand Company. Doubtless the views and behaviour of the settlers with regard to the Maoris went against FitzRoy's sense of justice and gave some excuse for his conduct, but it is clear that he ruled with his characteristic absence of judgment. A petition was sent to the Home Parliament, with the result that he was recalled, and the petitioners add to their concrete grievances the following: 'They cannot but think that the somewhat obtrusive and absorbing observance of devotional duties . . . has contributed to give to Government House the air of a conventicle, and caused its almost entire desertion by all but missionaries.' On his return he was appointed Superintendent of the Woolwich Dockyard, and carried out trials in the frigate *Arrogant*, an early attempt to fit a warship with an auxiliary screw. He retired from active service in 1851, and was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in the same year. He was made chief of the Meteorological Office of the Board of Trade in 1854, and in the course of seniority became rear-admiral in 1857, and vice-admiral in 1863. The Lifeboat Association owed

much to his secretaryship, and the future Mercantile Marine Act was based largely on his early draft. The strain of overwork was too great for his sensitive and unbalanced mind, and finally, like his uncle Lord Castlereagh, he committed suicide at the age of sixty.

The whole story of the association of FitzRoy with Charles Darwin is of striking interest, not only as it reveals the remarkable personality of FitzRoy himself, but also as it throws light on one of the most potent influences of Darwin's life. For though the circumstances of the voyage must be reckoned as the main factor of those decisive years, yet I think it can be maintained that the personal element counted also, and that the close companionship of a man of FitzRoy's moral ascendancy and intellectual intransigence left their indelible mark. Darwin was not yet twenty-three when he set sail, on the threshold of his career, whilst FitzRoy was only twenty-six, years when personal influences count for much, and Darwin from the very beginning fell under his senior's charm. FitzRoy possessed an integrity of outlook that made an instant appeal to Darwin, and it was only later that intellectual divergences became apparent as the two young men developed along separate and ever-widening paths. Darwin had no unorthodox tendencies as a young man, and even in the second year of the voyage was still visualising himself in the future as an English country clergyman. He wrote to his sister: 'Although I like this knocking about, I find I steadily have a distant prospect of a very quiet Parsonage, and I can see it even through a grove of Palms.' FitzRoy's philosophic and religious reasoning must before long have started the ferment of questioning in his young companion's mind, for FitzRoy was a passionate believer in Creation in its crudest and most literal sense. But Darwin's warmth and loyalty outlasted all differences, and he retained a deep respect for his Captain's fine and rare qualities to the end.

To fill in the shadowy portrait of FitzRoy has been my aim, with special reference to his influence on Darwin's life and work, and I have had the privilege of being able to draw from Darwin's unpublished Autobiography and from some unpublished letters in possession of the family. The austere officer, feared and revered by his men, of aristocratic bearing, generous, extravagant, devoted to his duty and negligent of all self-interest, suddenly is revealed in some new light by the sympathetic hand of his young contemporary as he writes to his sisters eager for news in England. His

vivid summing-up after four months at sea, gives his early impression.

'Botofogo Bay, April 25, 1832.

'... And now for the Captain, as I daresay you feel some interest in him. As far as I can judge, he is a very extraordinary person. I never before came across a man whom I could fancy being a Napoleon or a Nelson. I should not call him clever, yet I feel convinced nothing is too great or too high for him. His ascendancy over everybody is quite curious; the extent to which every officer and man feels the slightest rebuke or praise would have been before seeing him incomprehensible. It is very amusing to see all hands hauling at a rope, they not supposing him on deck, and then observe the effect when he utters a syllable; it is like a string of dray-horses, when the waggoner gives one of his awful smacks. His candour and sincerity are to me unparalleled; and using his own words his "vanity and petulance" are nearly so. I have felt the effects of the latter. . . . His greatest fault as a companion is his austere silence produced from excessive thinking. His many good qualities are numerous: altogether he is the strongest marked character I ever fell in with.'

Darwin's next letter refers to FitzRoy's breakdown in 1834 at the time of an excess of anxiety of mind. Weighed down by his laborious instructions from the Admiralty, he had at various times purchased on his own responsibility additional boats, hoping to be reimbursed later, the smaller craft to act as auxiliary surveying vessels amongst the sand-banks and intricate harbours of the Argentine which must otherwise have been left uncharted, and a larger schooner to act as tender to the *Beagle*. He wrote of the schooner, 'My wish to purchase her was unconquerable,' and further explains his action. 'I had become more fully convinced than ever that the *Beagle* could not execute her allotted task before she and those in her would be in so much need of repair and rest, that the most interesting part of the voyage—the carrying a chain of Meridian Distances around the globe—must eventually be sacrificed to the tedious although not less useful details of coast surveying.' The vexation and mortification when he heard that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty would give him no assistance hastened his breakdown. It is said that the total of FitzRoy's reckless and quixotic expenditure amounted to over £3,000, to the permanent benefit of the survey and those under him, but at the expense of an undermining bitterness to FitzRoy.

Darwin's account to his sister Catherine of the Captain's condition follows.

'Valparaiso, Nov. 8th, 1834.

'Captain FitzRoy has for the last two months been working *extremely* hard, and at the same time constantly annoyed by interruptions from officers of other ships. The selling the Schooner and its consequences were very vexatious; the cold manner the Admiralty (solely I believe because he is a Tory) have treated him . . . have made him very thin and unwell. This was accompanied by a morbid depression of spirits, and a loss of all decision and resolution. The Captain was afraid that his mind was becoming deranged (being aware of his hereditary predisposition), and all that Bynoe<sup>1</sup> could say, that it was merely the effects of bodily health and exhaustion after such application, would not do; he invalided and Wickham was appointed to the Command.'

Fortunately the tide of his depression turned, and he was persuaded to withdraw his resignation.

Darwin's next letter brings out another side of FitzRoy's character. In this episode his rapid decision and rapid action were the means of saving his friend Captain Seymour and the crew of the wrecked *Challenger* from off the coast of Chile. FitzRoy had a desperate ride through many miles of hostile Araucanian Indian country to locate the camp of the wrecked crew, and after his return piloted the *Blonde*, a frigate under Commodore Mason, to the spot and carried through the rescue only just in time, for disease, starvation and menacing Indians were all threatening the safety of the encampment. We can read between the lines in FitzRoy's own account and get the impression of a splendid and almost ferocious determination to save his friend, all obstacles being hewn away. Darwin's letter home tells of the stir the event caused.

'Lima, July, 1835.

' . . . When I reached the Port of Copiapò, I found the *Beagle* there but with Wickham as temporary Captain. Shortly after the *Beagle* got into Valparaiso, news arrived that H.M.S. *Challenger* was lost at Arauco, and that Captain Seymour and crew were badly off among the Indians. The old Commodore in the *Blonde* was very slack in his motions—in short afraid of getting on that lee-shore in the Winter; so Captain FitzRoy had to bully him, and at last offered to go as Pilot. We hear that they have succeeded in saving nearly all hands, but that the Captain and Commodore have had a tremendous quarrel; the former having hinted

<sup>1</sup> The ship surgeon.

something about a Court Martial for his slowness. We suspect that such a taught-hand as the Captain is, has opened the eyes of everyone, fore and aft, in the *Blonde* to a surprising degree. We expect the *Blonde* will arrive here in a very few days, and all are very curious to hear the news; no change in state politicks ever caused in its circle more conversation than this wonderful quarrel between the Captain and the Commodore has with us.'

By the end of 1835 the voyage was drawing to a close and in the sequence of Charles's letters to his family there comes a change in his attitude towards his home-coming and his future. In this last year he visualises himself not in a parsonage, but in lodgings near the British Museum, or in Cambridge within reach of his scientific friends; or in 'lodgings with good big rooms in some vulgar part of London.'

On the homeward journey across the Atlantic Darwin gives another picture of the Captain.

'April 29, 1836.

... The Captain is daily becoming a happier man; he now looks forward with cheerfulness to the work which is before him. He, like myself, is busy all day in writing, but instead of geology, it is the account of the voyage. I sometimes fear his "Book" will be rather diffuse, but in most other respects it certainly will be good. His style is very simple and excellent. He has proposed to me to join him in publishing the account; that is for him to have the disposal and arranging of my *Journal*, and to mingle it with his own. Of course I have said I am perfectly willing, if he wants materials, or thinks the chit-chat details of my *Journal* anyways worth publishing.'

Perhaps it was some awakening realisation of the trend of Darwin's scientific views that led to this suggestion of joint authorship, but presumably FitzRoy found this mingling of the results impossible and we hear no more of the plan. No thought of fame had entered Darwin's mind at that time, though scientific ambitions were beginning to stir. He still deferred to FitzRoy's opinion as to the merits of his *Journal*. But no sooner on English soil once again, than Darwin stepped into his own kingdom, an acknowledged master in geological matters. A new note of certainty is found in his letters, and even of criticism of his revered Captain. Though the friendship continued for many years and Darwin retained the warmest memories of FitzRoy's personality to the end of his life, yet the termination of the voyage and more especially the publica-

tion of their accounts of those arduous years of travel, marked the true close of the great intimacy and co-operation of these two remarkably diverse men.

The preparation for the press was severe work for both. FitzRoy was responsible for the first two volumes, whilst Darwin's *Journal* formed the third. Darwin had besides to cope with his collections and his purely scientific results. It was not until 1839, three years after they landed, that the volumes appeared. Darwin writes of the Captain's labours to his sister Susan, and the critical note is sounded.

'April, 1839 (Probably written from Great Marlborough St.).

'I went to the Captain's yesterday evening to drink tea. It did one good to hear Mrs. FitzRoy talk about her baby; it was so beautiful, and its little voice was such charming music. The Captain is going on very well, that is for a man who has the most consummate skill in looking at everything and everybody in a perverted manner. He is working very hard at his book, which I suppose will really be out in June. I looked over a few pages of Captain King's *Journal*: I was absolutely forced against all love of truth to tell the Captain that I supposed it was very good, but in honest reality no pudding for little schoolboys ever was so heavy. It abounds with Natural History of a very trashy nature. I trust the Captain's own volume will be better.'

That candid phrase sums him up: 'a man who has the most consummate skill in looking at everything and everybody in a perverted manner.' A sad verdict to come to after the whole-hearted praises of eight years before.

Henry Colburn, the publisher, brought out a further issue of Darwin's volume alone, its greater popularity being soon evident. It must have been of the first and second issue together that Darwin writes in the following letter to his sister Susan. After speaking of some of his friend's speculations and their losses he says: 'The world is gone mad with their speculations. Talking of money, I reaped the other day all the profit which I shall ever get from my *Journal*, which consisted in my paying Mr. Colburn £21 10s. for the copies which I presented to different people; 1,337 copies have been sold.—This is a comfortable arrangement, is it not?' Mr. Colburn, one gathers, was a good business man. It was not until 1845 that Darwin handed the copyright of the second edition over to Murray for £150, substantial alterations having been made. It was this later edition that won such an immense popularity.

In these quotations from Darwin's letters home, and in the



short survey of FitzRoy's life, there are indications of the gloomy anxiety that pervaded his mind, and quotations from his own writings will show that an increasing religious mania was the real cause of their later divergence of view. FitzRoy, with his violent temper, was a man very difficult to live with, and it needed Darwin's abhorrence of unnecessary dissension and his constant pursuit of the best in his fellow-men to ensure that during the five years' intimacy on board the *Beagle* there were not more than 'several serious quarrels.' One of these was on the subject of slavery, but we never hear of any open disagreement on intellectual or religious subjects. Both admired and upheld missionary enterprise, Darwin as a quiet observer, but FitzRoy with all the zeal of his uncompromising nature. Indeed his ardour had led him far afield, and readers of the *Beagle* will remember that intriguing figure Jemmy Button, and his compatriots from Tierra del Fuego.

In his earlier command of the *Beagle*, FitzRoy had taken four natives on board; two, Fuegia Basket, a girl of eight, and Boat Memory, a man, were taken as hostages after the loss of a much-prized whale-boat. Another man, York Minster, was taken shortly afterwards; later a boy, Jemmy Button, of his own will entered the sailors' boat from the canoe of his relatives during some trading operations, and was bought for the price of one button—whence his name. Fuegia Basket received her name from the contrivance by which the sailors from the lost whale-boat returned to the *Beagle* bringing the news of the loss, and which resembled a basket rather than any species of boat. When FitzRoy first took them on board he

'then only thought of detaining them while we were on their coasts; yet afterwards finding that they were happy and in good health, I began to think of the various advantages which might result to them and their countrymen, as well as to us, by taking them to England, educating them there as far as might be practicable, and then bringing them back to Tierra del Fuego. These ideas were confirmed by finding that the tribes of Fuegians eastward of Christmas Sound, were hostile to York Minster's Tribe, and that we therefore could not in common humanity, land them in Nassau Bay, without risking his life; hence I had only the alternative of beating to westward, to land them in their own districts, which circumstances rendered impracticable, or that of taking them to England. In adopting the latter course, I incurred a deep responsibility, but was fully aware of what I was undertaking. . . . They understood clearly . . . that they would return

to their country at a future time, with iron, tools and clothes and knowledge which they might spread among their countrymen. They were extremely tractable and good-humoured, even taking pains to walk properly, and get over the crouching posture of their countrymen.'

FitzRoy carried through his project and maintained them at his own expense in England where the Admiralty allowed them entry into the Royal Naval Hospital for a time. He took great trouble over their vaccination, but to his great sorrow one, Boat Memory, died of small-pox soon after arrival. They were unmoved by the sights of a civilised town. The only show of any emotion on driving through London was from York Minster, who cried 'Look' as he fixed his eyes on that now transplanted landmark, the lion on Northumberland House. They were taught the simpler truths of Christianity and the use of tools. They even visited St. James's, where they were interviewed by His Majesty and Queen Adelaide. Her Majesty 'left the room in which they were for a minute, and returned with one of her own bonnets, which she put upon the girl's head. Her Majesty then put one of her rings upon the girl's finger, and gave her a sum of money to buy an outfit of clothes when she should leave England to return to her own country.'

With his sense of responsibility heavy upon him, FitzRoy began making his private preparations for their return in the summer of 1831. Too late to save himself from the heavy expense entailed by these arrangements, he was unexpectedly reappointed to the command of the *Beagle*, with elaborate instructions with reference to a continuation of the survey of those same dangerous coasts. So that the *Beagle* in addition to her ordinary crew, contained an odd assemblage when she set sail once again in December, 1831. There was Charles Darwin, naturalist, and an artist, both present through FitzRoy's enterprise; the three surviving Fuegians, and a missionary to accompany them and, if it proved possible, settle with them on their own soil. Also an unsorted mass of goods to bring civilisation to the island, including wine-glasses, tea-trays, fine white linen and beaver hats; the seamen enjoyed some 'fair jokes at the expence of those who had ordered complete sets of crockery ware.'

After a thirteen-month voyage FitzRoy disembarked from the *Beagle* with his Fuegians, the missionary Matthews, and his three boatloads of 'useful' articles, to re-establish the natives on the island of Navarin. There wigwams were built, gardens marked out,

and presumably the nomadic canoe Indians were equipped with beaver hats, trousers and fine white linen, whilst their wigwams were furnished with complete sets of toilet crockery. FitzRoy then left Matthews, not without qualms, and returned in a week to find the missionary's sense of security destroyed by the hostile demonstrations of the tribe. Matthews was therefore taken back on board the *Beagle*, and a year passed before FitzRoy revisited the scene, when he found the wigwams deserted and plundered and Jemmy Button in his original nakedness 'except for a bit of skin about the loins; his hair was long and matted.' He told the Captain how York Minster and Fuegia Basket had cunningly stolen his possessions and had left him. But Jemmy would not hear of returning to England, and insisted on his great contentment. He was a married man and had the food he liked.

Here was a bad breakdown in the plan, but FitzRoy seemed hardly disillusioned. One wonders whether he followed the train of events in the missionary world that ensued from his own account and Darwin's of the misery of the Fuegian native. Did he read of the calamitous sequel on the very same spot where he had based his original hopes, on which occasion it is alleged that Jemmy's son threw the stone that felled the missionary? The natives of Tierra del Fuego had had too long an apprenticeship in the ways of the white man, learnt from the piratical fortune-hunters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, quickly to unlearn such bitter experience. The missionaries had to suffer, and the tales of their martyrdom caused fresh waves of enthusiasm in England. It was not until the suitability of the Fuegian uplands for sheep-ranching was discovered that any stability was gained, and the missionaries have been blamed for combining a thriving business with the saving of souls. In any case the balance of well-being for the native was destroyed for ever, and the new conditions of clothing, food and habitation, together with the introduction of new diseases, led to such a diminution in numbers that in the end the mission died for want of material. Yet these Indians had thriven on their whale-oil coating and on their fare of mussels and clams before European interference destroyed their virility and independence. When the tragic history of the Fuegian aborigines comes to be fully recorded, FitzRoy's noble motives but misguided actions will receive their due. It must be stated in fairness that it was doubtless through the united efforts of FitzRoy and the later missionaries that the Admiralty charts of 1870 were able to say: 'A great change

has been effected in the natives generally, and the Yaghan Natives<sup>1</sup> from Cape San Diego to Cape Horn can be trusted.'

It is interesting to note that Darwin's first publication apart from a privately printed pamphlet, was a vindication of missionary work, written in conjunction with FitzRoy and bearing both signatures, entitled *A letter containing remarks on the Moral State of Tahiti*. This letter, dated June, 1836, was published, but in what Journal I have been unable to discover. To the end of Darwin's life he followed the movement and supported it. The Fuegian experiment does not seem to have discouraged the writers of the Tahiti letter. They speak of the 'change of nature' in the individuals after their education in England, and their complete belief in the adaptability of the Fuegian and in his power of adopting Christian ideals. 'Surely if three years sufficed to change the nature of such cannibal wretches as Fuegians, and transform them into well-behaved civilised people . . . there is some cause for thinking that a savage is not irreclaimable.' The evidence seems hardly to justify these conclusions.

Though the two writers of the missionary letter saw eye to eye on this subject, yet the rift was there ready to open. Darwin's notebooks were filling and his mind was ripening. Evolutionary views were in the air; he absorbed the geological reasoning of Lyell's first volume eagerly during the voyage. That FitzRoy and Darwin discussed scientific matters is proved by the parallel accounts in their separate volumes of the expeditions that they made in common, where the similarities and differences are illuminating. FitzRoy himself must have become alarmed at the trend of some of these talks, and therefore he disburdens himself to us in the last two chapters of the *Narrative of the Beagle* entitled 'Remarks on the early migration of the Human Race,' and 'A very few Remarks with reference to the Deluge.' Surely a more naïve statement has seldom been recorded, and perhaps it is hardly fair to quote from these pages written so humbly and as he says 'in a purblind search after truth,' yet with the fervour of a zealot to save young sailors from the new arguments of false philosophers, and with a decided echo of the 'smack of the waggoner's whip' to lash the wanderer back into the narrow path. That FitzRoy felt the cleavage in the two points in view is clear, and the note of a definite challenge is sounded which must have acted as a stimulus to Darwin's unfolding ideas. Before proceeding to these passages,

<sup>1</sup> Jemmy Button's tribe.

I will give his first mention of his plan of engaging a scientific companion for the voyage, when his ardour and spirit of enquiry were unassailed by gloomy doubts and fears. In the year 1830 on his earlier voyage to S. America he had already felt the need of a trained geologist and wrote :

‘There may be metal in many of the Fuegian mountains, and I much regret that no person in the vessel was skilled in mineralogy, or at all acquainted with geology. It is a pity that so good an opportunity of ascertaining the nature of the rocks and earths of these regions should have been almost lost. I could not avoid often thinking of the talent and experience required for such scientific researches, of which we were wholly destitute ; and inwardly resolving that if ever I left England again on a similar expedition, I would endeavour to carry out a person qualified to examine the land ; while the officers and myself would attend to hydrography.’

This open-minded spirit became obscured later, and the following passage shows the change from the earlier attitude. He writes :

‘While led away by sceptical ideas, and knowing extremely little of the Bible, one of my remarks to a friend on crossing some vast plains composed of rolled stones bedded in diluvial detritus some hundred feet in depth, was “this could never have been effected by a forty days’ flood”—an expression plainly indicative of the turn of mind and ignorance of Scripture. . . . I mention this particularly, because I have conversed with persons fond of geology, yet knowing no more of the Bible than I knew at that time.’

The sceptical friend was clearly Darwin.

There follows a long discussion on the Deluge and the Ark with all the corroborative evidence he can muster—twenty-five pages of closely argued matter difficult to take seriously. The fossils of S. America, embedded trees and coal measures, meteorological observations, were all suborned into evidences to vindicate the complete literality of the Book of Genesis. Darwin probably did not see the chapter until it was published. One wonders what he thought.

The next passage I will quote is definitely non-evolutionary, and would suggest that some discussion between the two on these subjects must have taken place.

'That man could have been first created in an infant or a savage state appears to my apprehension impossible ; (for a moment taking a view of the case unaided by Scripture) . . . after a few hours of apathetic existence he must have perished. The only idea I can reconcile to reason is that man was created perfect in body, perfect in mind, and knowing by inspiration enough for the part he had to perform ;—such a being it would be worse than folly to call savage.

'Have we a shadow of ground for thinking that wild animals or plants have improved since their creation ? Can any reasonable man believe that the first of a race, species or kind, was the most inferior ? Then how for a moment could false philosophers, and those who have been led away by their writings, imagine that there were separate beginnings of savage races, at different times and in different places ? Yet I may answer this question myself ; for until I had thought much on the subject, and had seen nearly every variety of the human race, I had no reason to give in opposition to doubts excited by such sceptical works, except a conviction that the Bible was true, that in all ages men had erred, and that sooner or later the truth of every statement contained in that record would be proved.'

Poor FitzRoy. He little knew that he was providing the ideal education for that false philosopher who, above all others, would finally relegate his cherished beliefs to dusty upper shelves. What an irony of Fate that these passages should be written by the originator of the scheme which led Darwin to the world-survey that laid the sure foundation for his evolutionary writings.

One more paragraph must be quoted, where the application to Darwin is clear.

'Much of my own uneasiness was caused by reading works written by men of Voltaire's school ; and by those of geologists who contradict by implication if not in plain terms, the authenticity of the Scriptures ; before I had any acquaintance with the volume which they so incautiously impugn. For Geology as a useful branch of Science, I have as high a respect as for any other young branch of the tree of knowledge, which has yet to undergo the trial of experience ; and no doubt exists in my own breast that every such additional branch, if proved by time to be sound and healthy, will contribute its share of nourishment and vigour to the tree which sprung from an immortal root. For men who, like myself formerly, are willingly ignorant of the Bible, and doubt its divine inspiration, I can only have one feeling—sincere sorrow.'



By science, he adds in a footnote, 'I mean Knowledge in its most comprehensive signification.' There is so much that is admirable in all this, and it was so small a twist that prevented him from welcoming every aspect and implication of Darwin's work. But the narrowing effect of his mania ever widened the divergence of their views, and, thorough in everything, he could admit no sort of compromise. He never recognised later the arguments in the *Origin of Species*. In the famous battle at the Oxford British Association in 1861, twenty-five years after the termination of the voyage, when Hooker and Huxley took up the cudgels in the open in favour of Darwin's views, FitzRoy rose to record his disagreement. 'He regretted the publication of Mr. Darwin's book, and denied Professor Huxley's statement that it was a logical statement of facts.'

That phrase is a sad peroration to the close comradeship of the *Beagle* years, and must have been spoken with much bitterness of thought. Did he compare the courses of their two lives, in his sad isolation? He must have watched Darwin, established in congenial work, and gaining fame in spite of constant ill-health, surrounded by devoted champions and friends, though he did not live to see his old shipmate's world-wide reputation. We, on the other hand, have watched FitzRoy with his inflexible opinions and obstinate conscientiousness, fighting the world and his own mentality to the tragic end.

I should like to suggest in conclusion that FitzRoy's twofold influence over Darwin has been imperfectly recognised, both the direct influence wielded by admiration and affection, and the secondary influence exerted by FitzRoy's misreading of natural phenomena and fixity of religious ideas, which in my belief acted as an intellectual spur to Darwin's candid and enquiring mind. Though this contrary influence must have urged Darwin along the pathway of exact thought and speculation, yet his love of and loyalty to FitzRoy may well have caused some retardation of the formulation of his evolutionary ideas for publication. Darwin pays tribute to FitzRoy's comradeship when he wrote on his departure to New Zealand in 1843: 'I cannot bear the thoughts of your leaving the country without seeing you once again; the past is often in my memory, and I feel that I owe to you much bygone enjoyment and the whole destiny of my life.' Our last view of the sad austere man shall be from another farewell letter of Darwin's that reveals the generous and warmer side of his nature. 'Farewell, dear Fitz-

Roy, I often think of your many acts of kindness to me, and not seldome of the time, no doubt quite forgotten by you, when before reaching Madeira, you came and arranged my hammock with your own hands, and which, as I afterwards heard, brought tears into my Father's eyes.'

Darwin's own account of FitzRoy, written during the last years of his life, less than half of which has been published in his *Autobiography*, will form a fitting ending to this survey of the relationship of these two great minds.

'FitzRoy's character was a singular one, with many very noble features; he was devoted to his duty, generous to a fault, bold, determined and indomitably energetic, and an ardent friend to all under his sway. He would undertake any sort of trouble to assist those whom he thought deserved assistance. He was a handsome man, strikingly like a gentleman with highly courteous manners, which resembled those of his maternal uncle the famous Ld. Castlereagh, as I was told by the Minister at Rio. Nevertheless he must have inherited much in his appearance from Charles II, for Dr. Wallich gave me a collection of photographs which he had made and I was struck by the resemblance of one to FitzRoy; on looking at the name I found it Ch. E. Sobieski Stuart, Count d'Albanie<sup>1</sup> and illegitimate descendant of the same monarch. FitzRoy's temper was a most unfortunate one, and was shown not only by passion, but by fits of long-continued moroseness against those who had offended him. His temper was usually worst in the early morning, and with his eagle eye he could generally detect something amiss about the ship, and was then unsparing in his blame. The junior officers when they relieved each other in the forenoon used to ask "whether much hot coffee had been served out this morning?" which meant how was the captain's temper? He was also somewhat suspicious and occasionally in very low spirits, on one occasion bordering on insanity. He seemed to me often to fail in sound judgment and common sense. He was very kind to me, but was a man very difficult to live with on the intimate terms which necessarily followed from our messing by ourselves in the same cabin. We had several quarrels, for when out of temper he was utterly unreasonable. For instance, early in the voyage at Bahia in Brazil he defended and praised the slavery which I abominated, and told me that he had just visited a great slave owner, who had called up many of his slaves and asked them whether they were happy, and whether they wished

<sup>1</sup> The Count d'Albanie's claim to Royal descent has been shown to be based on a myth.

to be free, and all answered no. I then asked him perhaps with a sneer, whether he thought that the answer of slaves in the presence of their master was worth anything. This made him excessively angry, and he said that as I doubted his word we could not live any longer together. I thought that I should have been compelled to leave the ship; but as soon as the news spread which it did quickly, as the Captain sent for the first Lieutenant to assuage his anger by abusing me, I was deeply gratified by receiving an invitation from all the gun-room officers to mess with them. But after a few hours FitzRoy showed his usual magnanimity by sending an officer to me with an apology and a request that I would continue to live with him. I remember another instance of his conduct. At Plymouth, before we sailed he was extremely angry with a dealer in crockery who refused to exchange some articles purchased in his shop: the Captain asked the man the price of a very expensive set of china and said "I should have purchased this if you had not been so disobliging." As I knew that the cabin was amply stocked with crockery, I doubted whether he had any such intention; and I must have shown my doubts in my face, for I said not a word. After leaving the shop, he looked at me, saying "You do not believe what I have said," and I was forced to own that it was so. He was silent for a few minutes, and then said "You are right, and I acted wrongly in my anger at the black-guard."

'At Conception in Chile, poor FitzRoy was sadly overworked and in very low spirits; he complained bitterly to me that he must give a great party to all the inhabitants of the place. I remonstrated and said I could see no such necessity on his part under the circumstances. He then burst out into a fury, declaring that I was the sort of man who would receive any favours and make no return. I got up and left the cabin without saying a word, and returned to Conception where I was then lodging. After a few days I came back to the ship, and was received by the Captain as cordially as ever, for the storm had by this time quite blown over. The first Lieutenant, however, said to me, "Confound you, philosopher, I wish you would not quarrel with the Skipper; the day you left the ship I was dead-tired (the ship was refitting) and he kept me walking the deck till midnight abusing you all the time."

'The difficulty of living on good terms with a Captain of a Man-of-War is much increased by its being almost mutinous to answer him as one would answer anyone else; and by the awe in which he is held or was held in my time by all on board. I remember hearing a curious instance of this in the case of the purser of the *Adventure*, the ship which sailed with the *Beagle*

during the first voyage. The purser was in a store in Rio de Janeiro purchasing rum for the ship's company, and a little gentleman in plain clothes walked in. The purser said to him, "Now, sir, be so kind as to taste this rum and give me your opinion of it." The gentleman did as he was asked, and soon left the store. The store-keeper asked the purser whether he knew that he had been speaking to the Captain of a Line of Battle Ship, which had just come into the harbour. The poor purser was struck dumb with horror; and let the glass of spirits drop from his hands on the floor, and immediately went on board, and no persuasion, as an officer in the *Adventure* assured me, could make him go on shore again, for fear of meeting the Captain after this dreadful act of familiarity. I saw FitzRoy only occasionally after our return home, for I was always afraid of unintentionally offending him, and did so once almost beyond mutual reconciliation. He was afterwards very indignant with me for having published so unorthodox a book (for he became very religious) as the *Origin of Species*. Towards the close of his life he was, as I fear, much impoverished, and this was largely due to his generosity. Anyhow, after his death a subscription was raised to pay his debts. His end was a melancholy one, namely suicide, exactly like that of his uncle Ld. Castlereagh whom he resembled closely in manner and appearance. His character was in several respects one of the most noble which I have ever known, though tarnished by grave blemishes.'

NORA BARLOW.

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Of the extracts from Darwin's correspondence, five letters and two short paragraphs have not been previously published. Less than half the autobiographical passage appears in *Life and Letters*.

### LITERARY ACROSTICS.

A LITERARY ACROSTIC is published every month, and the Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers two prizes to the most successful solvers. The winners will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. If several solvers send solutions of equal merit, the two whose answers are opened first will win the prizes.

#### DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 104.

'This —— never did, nor never shall,  
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.'

'Nought shall make us rue,  
If —— to itself do rest but true.'

1. 'They turn up the rugs, They —— the mugs,  
But, no! no such thing, They can't find the ring!'
2. 'Fair Daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon:  
As yet the early-rising Sun  
Has not attain'd his ——.'
3. 'Down sunk the Bell with a —— sound,  
The bubbles rose and burst around.'
4. 'Apollo hunted Daphne so,  
Only that she might —— grow.'
5. 'Zephyr with —— playing,  
As he met her once a Maying.'
6. 'A —— spoke to a ——,  
A Queen sent word to a Throne.'
7. 'Sage beneath the spreading oak  
Sat the ——, hoary chief;  
Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage, and full of grief.'

## RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page vi of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue; and he must be careful to give also his real name and address.
4. Solvers should not write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
5. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
6. Answers to Acrostic No. 104 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W.1, and must arrive not later than April 20. No answers will be opened before this date.

## ANSWER TO No. 103.

1. R attl E
2. A d A
3. B rilli G
4. B il L
5. I nsid E
6. T wis T

PROEM: *Wonderland*, chapters 4 and 3.

## LIGHTS:

1. *Through the Looking-Glass*, ch. 4.
2. *Wonderland*, ch. 2.
3. *Through the Looking-Glass*, ch. 6.
4. *Wonderland*, ch. 11.
5. *Wonderland*, ch. 6.
6. *Through the Looking-Glass*, ch. 2.

Acrostic No. 102 ('Horse Steed'): Most of the lights proved quite straightforward, but the 'Sparkle' quotation was fatal to many competitors; they did not remember Herrick's lines to Dianeme, though these appear in many anthologies, including *The Golden Treasury* and *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. The two prizes are taken by Mrs. Boucher, Wickham House, Clevedon, Somerset, and Miss E. G. Prickard, Scotney Lodge, Fleet, Hants, who will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.



